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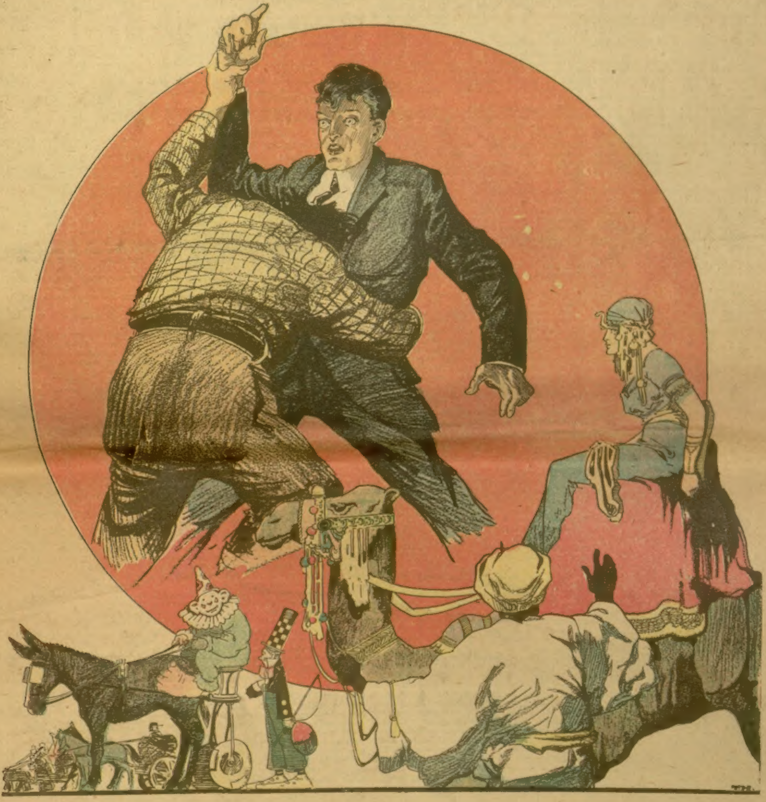

Stealing the Show

-:- Or, -:-

A Circus Tragedy

By John Miller Gregory

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CHAPTER I.

HEARD BY CHANCE.

BILLY DANE, press agent for The Five United Shows, walked slowly down a side street of Benton Harbor, a little town on the east coast of Florida, with his hands thrust into his pockets and an unaccustomed attack of homesickness gnawing at his soul. It was early evening, and he was trying to get a taste of the fresh ocean breeze after a day's strenuous work bent over his typewriter grinding out advance "dope" about the shows for the newspapers.

Billy had been in the winter quarters of the show for a week, but the time had been spent in working, so that he had seen hardly any of the people with whom he was to be associated during the coming circus season.

Benton Harbor was an ideal place for the winter quarters of a circus. With its mild climate, its beautiful harbor, its pretty, sandy streets, it had kept many of the officials and performers of the circus loafing there during the winter when they might have secured profitable vaudeville engagements. But Billy had spent his winter back home, working on his old newspaper. He had arrived in Benton Harbor to find the circus people busy with painting and cleaning and sewing canvas. The gaudy showiness of the circus was gradually emerging from its chrysalis, ready for summer.

At a corner, where a sandy street cut into another sharply and ran down toward the river front, Billy came to a quiet little cafe, which invited him within, where he caught sight of spotless floors covered with white sand, and green tables and chairs placed around the room.

He entered and went to the rear, where there were little private rooms furnished with wicker lounging chairs, and from which he could catch a glimpse of the lights on the boats in the harbor. The breeze played thru the room, over and under the low partitions which separated it from the other rooms. Billy sat down and ordered lemonade.

"I jes' bets yo' belongs to de succus, boss," said the black boy who brought it to him. "Mos' all de genermans what belongs to de succus orders lemonade or beer."

Billy buried his nose in the refreshing sprigs of mint with which the lemonade was garnished, as the negro shuffled around wiping the imaginary dust from the dustless table tops.

"Dere's anudder succus generman what comes in heah ebery night, boss," went on the loquacious negro.

"What sort of a looking chap is he?" asked Billy.

"Well, sah, as clos' as I kin reckollek, he's a powerful big man, with a diamon' on his shirt front en annudder on his finger. 'Pears to me now lak he wears a brown suit ob close en a Panama hat. I spec he'll be 'roun' heah fo' long."

"Well, what about him?" Billy wanted to know.

"Nuthin', sah, nuthin', 'cep' ebery night, when he comes in heah, he axes me is a generman been in heah lookin' fer him. I wuz jes' wonderin', sah, whether er no you wuz dat generman?"

Outside a big, jovial voice hailed the bartender as its owner tramped thru the saloon and back toward Billy's room. The next moment a big man passed the door and went into the next room, followed by a smaller one. As they sat down, the big man yelled for the waiter in a thunderous voice.

"Nigger!"

"Y-a-as, suh," laughed the black boy, as he bounded out of Billy's room and into the next one. "I bin a-waitin' fer yo' all, suh."

"Well, hustle along a couple of gin rickeys and have 'em sour."

The boy was out on a run, and returned a few moments later bearing the drinks on a waiter held high in the air precariously on one flat hand.

Dane sat quietly as the men in the next room drank their rickeys and the black boy shuffled out front to the bar. Without intending it, half-sleepily, Billy was listening to the conversation going on in the next room. The men apparently made little effort to lower their voices, and before he realized it, Billy was straining every sense to get their words.

"I'm glad you got here today, Tim," the big man was saying. "I've been waiting here a week for you. What did McCoy tell you?"

"Nothing," the little man answered. "He said to report to you and you would give me orders."

"That's right. Well, this is the layout. McCoy wants this show. It's a good little twelve-car outfit, just the right size to graft with, because it ain't too big to take into the little towns. But of course McCoy don't want to pay for anything he can get for nothing. He's got an idea that this Morgan who owns this show is a boob, see? So he sends me and you down here to grab the whole business."

"Gee!" the little man exclaimed, "stealin' a whole show ain't goin' to be no cinch."

"It's going to be easy enough when you hear how I've got it planned. I've got the sideshow privilege from Morgan, and Sampson, the treasurer, is an old friend of mine. Now, I want you to get to Morgan and get a job selling tickets for the big show. Better see Sampson. He's doing the hiring of the ticket men, and he'll put you on if you tell him I sent you."

"Is he hep to why you are over here on this show?"

"Not yet. You're the first one I've told, but Sampson'll be with us all right. He's been after Morgan for a year or two to put on the graft with the show, but Morgan can't see it."

"Suppose Sampson won't give me a job? What'll I do then?"

"Come back here and let me know. If he don't put you on, it'll mean he ain't with us, and the sooner we know that, the better."

"And what do I get when the big doings come off?" asked the little man.

"If we put this deal over, you'll come in for a big share. When we put the graft on, I'll do the fixing and you can have any privilege you want, or you can have them all on percentage. Is it a go?"

Billy heard a chair being pushed back and the sound of two hands coming together in a hearty clasp.

"Is it a go? I'm going right now to see Sampson. You wait here for me."

"Be sure that none of the wise guys on the show are around when you talk to Sampson. Better not mention McCoy's name at all. I'll do the talking when the time comes."

"Don't be afraid of my telling," said the little man. "If Morgan ever gets wise to why we are here, it'll be all off with us. He'd drop us off the train some night in the woods and leave us there."

Laughing softly to himself over his joke, the little man went out of the room and Billy saw him pass his door and go toward the front of the saloon. The press agent for The Five United Shows sat dumb with astonishment, mopping the excited perspiration from his brow.

"Good Lord!" he exclaimed to himself, "that's a new one on me. They're framing up to steal the show! I guess it's time for Little Billy, the detective, to get busy and find out what he can. I can see myself out of a job pretty soon, unless I nip this little scheme in the bud."

CHAPTER II.

A PROPOSITION.

BILLY sat in the little room buried in thought. He knew Tom McCoy for one of the most unscrupulous men in the circus business. He had a reputation among the men who follow the big tops of never paying for anything when he could get out of it, and of carrying the toughest grafting outfit on the road. It was said that his circus train was armored, and that each performer, when he signed his contract, knew that he was signing an agreement to fight for McCoy whenever the occasion arose. Fights were almost an every night occurrence on the McCoy show. Some town man would be "rolled" for a large sum by one of the grafters, and bring his gang down to the circus lot to clean out the show, and then every person on the show would have to wade in with a stake to help get the show's property out of the town undamaged.

Billy had known a tumbler on McCoy's show. This man had told him that whenever McCoy repeated in a town, he changed the name of his show, so that he never showed the same town twice under the same name. It was as good as McCoy's life was worth to try it.

But McCoy made money, as Billy well knew. At the beginning of every season for the last three years, he had received a letter from the circus manager offering him a position as press agent with the McCoy show, and each time the offer was better than he had received from any of the other circuses. But Billy had refused consistently. He flattered himself that he never soiled his hands with the graft, and he knew that if he refused to help the despoilers, his job with McCoy wouldn't last long.

Billy had met McCoy once in Kansas City, and he recalled distinctly the bad impression McCoy had made upon him. He hadn't regarded the circus owner, however, as a man who dared play big games. He seemed more the petty grafter, the short-change man, or the man who would run a crooked roulette game in a privilege car for the purpose of getting the wages of the razorbacks.

The more he thought of the bold scheme to steal the circus, the more he wondered how they were going to do it. He knew he ought to go at once to Morgan, but, after all, he had nothing to tell him beyond what he had just heard, and Morgan had troubles enough without this vague information. He knew Morgan would laugh at the story, so he decided to lie low and say nothing until he knew more of the plans of the conspirators.

But something had to be done quickly, he thought, as the show opened the next day, and there was no telling when the plot would begin to work out. With a determined squaring of the jaws, he arose from the table and started out. At the door his way was barred by the big man, who had risen unnoticed from his seat and come into the room occupied by Billy.

"Excuse me, pal," said Moran, as he held out a fat hand in greeting. "I'm waiting here for a friend to return, and I got lonesome. I was passing the door and saw you, so I thought you would join me in a drink."

Without waiting for a reply, he sat down at a table and motioned Billy to take the opposite chair. Hypnotized by the man's self-assurance, Billy sat down. When the drinks had been set before them, Moran leaned over to Billy.

"Young man," he asked, "would you like to go out with a circus?"

Something inside Billy bade him keep from this man the knowledge that he already was with the show. He thought that in this way he might gain some information.

"Sure," he said, with a smile.

"Well, I've got charge of the sideshow with the circus that's been wintering here. We're opening here tomorrow night, and I find I'm short of help. I want a bright young man to sell tickets, and —" he looked up sharply at the young man—"to do whatever else he's told to do."

Billy grinned openly at him. "I get you," he said. "You want a live one who knows how to keep his mouth shut."

"Exactly," Moran stated. "Things are apt to happen around this show that ought not to be talked about. Whatever I tell you to do, it'll be between you and me, see? You'll be working for me, and as long as you keep your mouth shut and stick to business you'll make good money, besides what you can graft off the ticket box. I ain't holding you down there. All I want's a fair deal."

"You're on," said Billy. "What're you going to put over?"

Moran looked at him keenly, as if trying to fathom his thoughts. Finally he said: "This is going to be a good thing for you. There's something breaking, and I need one or two trustworthy men to help me put it over. I've been seeing you around here for several days, and you look good to me. I sized it up that you ought to have a good job, and if you had it you'd play square. You stick to me and do what I tell you, with your eyes and ears open and your mouth shut, and in less than two months' time you'll have more money than you ever had in your life."

Before Billy could reply there came thru the open window the pattering sound of running feet on the packed sand walk, and the distant sound of shouting voices. The next instant, Moran's little friend, Tim Marshall, rushed excitedly into the room where Billy and Moran sat. His face was pale, and his eyes shone brightly. He held one hand in his pocket. Moran was up and turned upon him in a flash.

"What's the matter?" he roared.

"Sampson!" gasped the little man. "Sampson's dead. Committed suicide not five minutes ago. Shot himself thru the heart."

"You're a dirty little liar," Moran bellowed, grasping the little man by the shoulder and shaking it roughly. "Did you do this?"

"Before God, I didn't!"

He thrust out a dirty hand in which a pistol was clasped.

"Listen!" He glanced around nervously. "I didn't do it, but Morgan did, see? Here's Sampson's pistol. There ain't no bullets been fired. But Morgan's gun, with Morgan's name on a silver plate on the side and one bullet fired, is on the table in the ticket wagon where Sampson's lying."

For a moment Moran glared at the little man; then his eyes cleared and a smile broke over his face.

"Good!" he chuckled. "That'll make it all the easier for us."

CHAPTER III.

ON BILLY'S SHOULDERS.

THE following morning, after a restless sleep, Billy went to the jail where Morgan had been taken the night before, charged with the murder of his treasurer. He found the show's owner in almost a nervous collapse from the sudden interruption of his plans for opening the season. It was with difficulty that he finally succeeded in getting Morgan to consider the situation calmly.

"It's a frame-up against you," Billy told the manager. "Moran and Tim Marshall want to keep you here so that they can steal your show. I was just about to get the whole layout when Marshall came in with the story of Sampson's death. Marshall said Sampson shot himself."

"Well, now, that's better," said Morgan. "I guess I'll be out as soon as I can get a preliminary hearing."

"Don't you believe it," Billy objected. "There're two to one against you, and both'll swear Marshall didn't say anything about suicide. Besides, Marshall stole Sampson's pistol and left yours on the table where the police found it last night. It won't do for me to swear to that, tho. They'll make me out a liar."

The frown returned to Morgan's face. "That's right," he said. "I hadn't thought of that. I guess I'm in for it, all right."

"That isn't all you're up against," said Billy. "Moran and Marshall are over here for Tom McCoy. He wants your show, and he doesn't want to buy it. I heard Moran and Marshall talking over the scheme last night."

"Well, what's to be done?" Morgan asked helplessly. His troubles had taken away his usual resourcefulness, and he was like a child in Billy's hands.

"I don't know yet," Billy replied. "I haven't been able to find what they are going to do. I'll save the show if I can for you, old man. Is there anybody on the show you can trust implicitly?"

Morgan stood wrapped in thought. After a while he said, "There's nobody on the show I can trust, except maybe White, the elephant man, and old Carboy, the trainmaster. I guess I'll have to put the whole thing up to you."

Billy realized the responsibility this would mean under ordinary circumstances, but at present it would be doubly hard. From what he had seen of Moran, he knew that both he and his partner would be thoroly unscrupulous. The thought that he would have to pit his brains against the rascality of these men, backed by the money and power of Tom McCoy and his utter fearlessness of the law, sent a little thrill of pleasure thru him. Dane was a born fighter.

"I'll do my best," he announced, squaring his shoulders. "Maybe you can get bond when the excitement quiets down, and can come on and help me out. If you can't, I'll keep in close touch with you. I won't see you again, as there's a lot of work to be done. Keep a stiff lip, and we'll trust to luck. If I don't win out, these grafters will have the hottest run for their money they ever saw."

The men clasped hands warmly, and Billy went out, his mind busily engaged with the problem that chance had so suddenly thrust upon him. He realized that it was up to him not only to save Morgan's show from McCoy, but to find the murderer of Sampson, if the treasurer had been murdered, or to prove the man a suicide if that had been his actual end.

He went at once to Morgan's private car, and ordered White, the elephant man, to be sent to him. White was a great hulk of a man, who had been with Morgan ever since the shows had taken to the road. Formerly he had been a lumberman in the Maine woods, and was known in the circus world for his brutality and the amount of work he could do well under any circumstances. He entered Morgan's office, growling at being taken from his work, but Billy brought him up short.

"Look here, White," he said, "cut out that growling and get down to business. Sampson's been murdered and Morgan's charged with the crime he didn't commit. It's up to you and me to save him."

"How?" asked White.

"That's what we've got to decide on at once. Morgan's placed me in charge of the shows, and he says that I should call on you for help if I need it. Are you with me?"

"Of course, if Morgan says so," growled White.

"Do you know Moran?" asked Billy.

"Do I know him?" White's tone held a distinct quality of disgust. "I've known him ever since I've been in the show business. He used to run a spindle on the Rose show, and he had a gun mob with the Van Harden shows in the West. Last year he was the fixer with Tom McCoy's show, and you know how crooked you've got to be to work for McCoy."

"Well, Morgan fell for his line of talk and a fat percentage offer for the kid show, and he's going to be over here this season."

"The devil he is!" White pulled open his blue shirt at the neck and bared his great hairy chest. "That means we'll have a bunch of trouble and a fight in every other town."

"It would if Moran remained on Morgan's show. But he doesn't intend doing that. He's over here for McCoy, and he and little Tim Marshall are framing up to steal the show. Now I believe it was Marshall that put the bullet into Sampson, but I haven't any proof as yet. You and I've got to save Morgan's show."

White's surprise was emitted in a bellow of anger. "Steal the show, eh? You can count on me to help put a crimp in that scheme."

Stealing a circus was not a new idea to White. Only a few years previously, the entire twelve-car show of George Morton's had been taken from its owner by the simple expedient of filing bogus claims against the owner, and then having sharp lawyers fight for them from court to court until Morton had been bankrupted by the proceedings.

"They'll probably try to pull off a row in some town one of these nights, and get you and whoever stands with you off the show," said White. "I'll try to line up the men to stand with you in case anything comes off. Moran probably holds a contract for the sideshow, so it would be dangerous to try to get him off."

"But I can get rid of his partner, Marshall," Billy determined suddenly. "Send him in here when you go out, and then come back the first chance you get, and we'll try to outline our method of proceeding."

"We won't have a chance today," said White. "I've got all I can attend to getting the show started. I'll try to see you tomorrow afternoon after the matinee show."

He went out, grumbling, and a few minutes later Marshall knocked at the office door. When he entered, his face went blank.

"What're you doin' here?" he demanded.

"I'm running this show," Billy declared, with a smile at Marshall's discomfiture, "and I've decided that we don't want you around here any longer. I don't want to see you on the train when we pull out."

"You redlight me?" Marshall's face went red with anger. "Well, I ain't askin' you to let me stay on this show. I'm sellin' tickets for Big Moran on the sideshow, and I'm takin' my orders from him."

The doorway was darkened by the big figure of the manager of the sideshow. He strode into the room, his fists doubled in a knot.

"Why didn't you tell me last night you were working for Morgan?" he demanded. "D'you think you can double-cross me?"

For reply, Billy went to the safe and took out Moran's contract. He saw with pleasure that it contained the usual two weeks' cancellation agreement. Without replying to Moran's question, he called the stenographer and dictated a cancellation of the contract. While the stenographer ticked it off on his machine, Billy listened calmly to Moran's railings. When he had read and signed the notice, he handed the original to Moran, putting the duplicate in the safe.

"That for yours," he said. "In two weeks you beat it, with your gang." With an effort he conquered the anger that he felt welling up in him against the big fellow. "I don't know what you're going to do, but I know what you're trying to do. Anyway, we don't want your kind around this show. If you want to leave at once, it will please me better. I'll take over your contracts with the sideshow people."

For answer Moran tore up the can-

WE STRONGLY advise our patrons to read "STEALING THE SHOW; or, A CIRCUS TRAGEDY," in this issue. Look out for "THE MAGIC METAL; or, A BATTLESHIP MYSTERY," next week; also look out for two remarkable stories, "THE WIRELESS PLOT; or, ON DEADMAN'S REEF," and "HIS PURPLE CAT; or, A REAL GOLD CURE." These stories will keep you awake and guessing. Don't miss them. Other thrilling and extraordinary stories to follow.

cellation notice and flung the pieces in Billy's face.

"That's what I care for you and your cancellation," he snarled. Followed by the spluttering little Marshall, he stamped out of the room.

CHAPTER IV.

STARTING TROUBLE.

THE next three days were busy ones for Billy Dane. He had wired to several men he knew who could handle the press work for the show, but had received no encouragement from any of them. In the absence of a press agent he had to do that work himself, which made his duties doubly hard. Finally a plea thru an agency brought him several likely replies, and from them he secured a young newspaper man from a nearby Southern town, who went at the work as if he intended to make good. Billy showed him his duties, and feeling fairly secure that this important work would be attended to, returned to his work as manager.

In spite of himself, however, Billy had been unable to learn more of the plans of Moran and Marshall. He worked every possible scheme to get this information without results. He found it impossible, even, to get rid of Marshall, who traveled from town to town on the regular train, and defied Billy to keep him away from the show. White, with whom he had frequent conferences, was equally at sea.

"So far as I can learn," said White, one afternoon, "they ain't tryin' to start no trouble among the people. They're playin' a deep game, I'm thinkin'."

"How do the workingmen stand?" asked Billy.

"Don't ask me," White replied. "You know how they are. They'd be with you until somebody else offered them a dollar a week more: then they'd beat it. They'll scrap for Moran if he offers them enough."

The next day, before parade, Moran came to Billy and held out his hand.

"We've called it off, Billy," he said. "Things are coming too good for me. I'm making money and I've decided to be satisfied. There ain't no use in you and me fighting. The show's making money, too, and it looks as if we're going to have a big season. Of course I'd like to put on the shell and one or two other games, but if you say no, why, it's all right with me."

Billy felt the underlying insincerity in the man's tone, but he was glad of the short respite that was offered him. He felt that Moran was playing for time, and that, before long, he would show his hand. In the meantime, he thought, a turn of fortune might put him in possession of Moran's scheme, and with that knowledge he was willing to take his chances on balking it.

He shook hands with Moran. "That's all right," he replied. "As long as you play fair, you'll find I'm with you. I'm expecting Morgan back in a day or so, and when he comes you won't have to do business with me any longer."

He added that as an afterthought. If Moran really was on the level, he thought, his face would show it. Otherwise, it might make the big fellow expose his hand.

The bluff worked. Moran's face changed instantly.

"Has he got bail?" he wanted to know.

"That'll be fixed in a day or so, we think," Billy replied, watching him closely. "They've got nothing against him but circumstantial evidence, and the case looks pretty slim."

Moran puffed at his cigar in silence for a few minutes. "All right," he said finally, and walked away without another word.

In a flash Billy realized that the man's plans had been brought to a head. He determined to be on the lookout for any sudden move. That night Moran was missing from the front of the sideshow, and the man in his place told Billy that Moran had gone out of town.

Friday night the shows played Darton, a little town near the county seat. The circus train was spotted on a spur track nearly a mile across town from the show lot, in a dark and lonely place.

Billy was late leaving his car for the grounds, and as he stepped down from the platform of the car, a man came out of the darkness and touched him on the shoulder.

"Are you the manager of this show?" asked the stranger.

Billy held up his lantern and peered into the man's face. He saw a little, rural-looking fellow, with thin chin whiskers and a nervous manner.

"Yes," he replied, "for the present. What can I do for you?"

"I'm the mayor of Horton, where you are billed to show tomorrow. Would you mind showing me over your cars?"

Billy sensed something suspicious in the man's voice. "Why, certainly not," he replied, wondering what the man was after. "What's the matter?"

"Nothin'," the mayor replied, "jes' wanted to see what kind of people you've got with the show."

"Where'll we start first?" Billy asked, thinking it best to humor the mayor and avoid probable trouble in the next town. Mentally he put the man down as a suspicious small town official—one of those whose special delight seems to be to bother showmen.

"We'll start right here with these cars," the mayor stated in a slightly belligerent tone, "an' I want to see every one of them berths in the sleepers."

"Oh, all right," said Billy. "Come along and let's get thru with it."

The mayor examined each berth in the sleeper carefully, until he came to an occupied one.

"What's the matter here?" he asked.

"Somebody feeling a little sick, I guess," Billy replied.

"Hum!" mused the mayor. "Any more like that?"

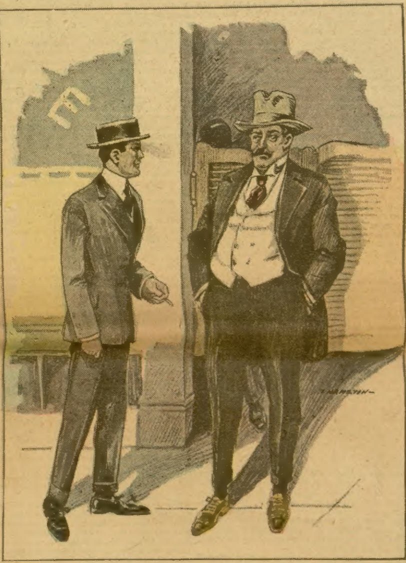
"I don't know," Billy replied. "There's usually a few sick ones where there's so many people."

"That's what I heard," said the mayor dryly. "Let's look thru the box cars. I heard some of the people sleep in them."

Billy unprotestingly led the way to the box cars, where old Carboy, the trainmaster, met them with a lantern.

"Dad," said Billy, "this is the mayor of Horton, he wants to look thru your cars. Show him everything he wants to see, and when he finishes send him up to the lot to see the show."

The mayor started off with the trainmaster, but turned back before Billy had taken many steps.



"You want a live one?"

"This man wants to show me everything, you understand," he said testily.

"Oh, sure," Billy replied wearily. "Show him everything, Dad, down to the key to the elephant's trunk."

"I wanted to be sure about seeing all the sick people," said the mayor, as he turned again to follow the old trainmaster.

Billy went back to the car, worried over the strange actions of the mayor. He remembered leaving some valuable papers open on his desk, and as the man's actions were so suspicious he decided to return to the car and put the papers back in the safe.

As he unlocked the office end of his car and entered, a figure of a man came around the other side of the car and silently mounted the steps. Suddenly he turned and beckoned to another silent shadow, standing under him on the ground. The man joined him on the platform, and the two slipped thru the door where Billy had just gone.

Billy was leaning over the safe, as the men entered. One of them raised a sandbag and struck the kneeling man sharply over the head. Without a word, Billy sank limply to the floor. The next moment his lantern was extinguished, and the men lifted him in their arms. Outside the car, they shouldered the inert form and slipped with it down the slight embankment. Then they disappeared with it into the shadow of the woods which ran back along the side of the railroad track.

CHAPTER V.

THE FIGHT.

IT WAS daylight when Billy regained consciousness. He found himself lying on a bench in which seemed to be a log cabin. Evidently the hut had been abandoned. The walls had big holes torn out of them, and the roof was filled with cracks thru which the light of the breaking day was filtering. There was no sash in the single window. Originally a shutter had kept out the wind and rain, but this had been torn from its hinges and was lying on the floor. The window opening was barred with heavy slats which had been nailed across it.

There was a rough pine table in one corner of the room, and Billy saw a bottle on it and a pack of greasy playing cards. Sleeping on the floor near the table were two rough-looking men who were strangers to him.

There was a sharp pain in Billy's head. As his mind cleared, he recalled the brutal attack in the car, but try as he would, beyond the remembrance of a step behind him and the thud as he was struck, his mind refused to go.

He lay still on the floor of the cabin trying to piece together his scattered wits. He remembered the inquisitive little mayor from Horton, and wondered if his appearance at the show could have had anything to do with the attack which followed. When he had considered this carefully, he put it away from him, determined to take it up later when he had a chance to investigate.

He tried to rise, but found himself bound hand and foot. One of the men turned over in his sleep, and Dane became quiet again. From the gray light which came thru the cracks in the roof of the hut, Billy judged it must have been about 4 or 5 o'clock, and he realized that he must act quickly.

He thought he knew exactly what Moran would do with the show, now that he could place himself in command. As he saw it, the sideshow manager would drive away from the show White, old Dad Carboy and the few faithful workmen and performers who refused to take his orders; install himself in Morgan's office; perhaps bill the show in a few towns in the State in which they were already booked, and then jump the entire outfit into another State where Morgan would have tremendous difficulty in showing that he had any claim whatsoever to the canvas, properties and organization.

One thing was plain to Dane. He must get away at once. He must reach Horton before the show left it that night, and get the town authorities on his side. He smiled as he thought that the little mayor's visit to the show the night before would not turn out entirely without fruit. That official, at least, would know him, and would identify him as the rightful manager.

He began to pull at his bonds, but he found that his captors had done their work well. He was bound with heavy hemp twine, which cut into his wrists when he tried to loosen it. After a few minutes' futile effort, Billy ceased effort in this direction and looked around the hut for some other means to free himself from his bonds.

There was not a vestige of anything sharp in sight. He wondered if there were any hinges on the broken shutter, but when he quietly crawled to it, he found that the hinges had been removed.

Then his eyes fell upon a stone, which had become loosened from the chimney, and he crawled over to it, but before he reached it, one of the sleeping men turned over in his sleep, and his arm went up and encircled the stone. Angrily he crawled to the table, and with the assistance it gave him, pulled himself to his feet.

His eyes fell upon a match which was lying on the table top. "Good enough," he chuckled, "I guess I'm out of here now, if this match will only strike."

With his back to the table, he arranged the cards down to the edge of the table, with each one overlapping another. Then he struck the match and lighted the first card. It blazed up, and Billy thrust the rope where it bound his wrist over the flame. The torture was exquisite as the flame grew larger and began to burn his wrist, but every moment, he felt, saw him nearer freedom. He watched the men on the floor closely, praying silently that he would be free before they awoke.

After what seemed an interminable time, the bonds on Billy's wrist dropped off. It was easy now to loosen the rope around his feet. The flames were burning brightly by this time, and beginning to scorch the dried wood of the old table top. Finally he stood free, and as he stepped out of the rope, the rotten pine table blazed into flame.

At the same moment, one of the men who had been lying with his face toward the table, sat up suddenly, awakened by the flare of red light in his face, and glared at Billy, whom he had seen but a few hours before, as he thought, safely trussed up.

With an angry cry the man was on his feet and rushed at Dane. Billy, intent on trying to put out the burning table, went down before the unexpected onslaught. The table was knocked to the floor, where it fell into a pile of dried straw, which caught fire instantly and flared up.

Billy, like a rubber ball, rebounded from the floor where he had fallen, and met the second rush of the big fellow with a straight blow to the chin. The man's head went back from the force of it, but he stood his ground and returned again to the attack, bellowing in a red rage to his companion, who still lay stretched before the fireplace, breathing audibly.

But Billy determined to keep this fellow from joining the fray. He knew he would have no chance with both of the men. He met the big brute's rush with his body doubled over, and the man, with his legs pulled suddenly from under him, went hurtling into a corner.

In a flash Billy was on the smaller one, who was now awake and sitting on the floor, staring at the two fighting men with amazement struggling to take the place of sleep in his eyes.

Billy fell upon him in a mass, and the man went backward. His head struck the piece of stone which had fallen from the chimney. There was a groan, and his form relaxed. With a little grunt of satisfaction, Billy arose to his feet to meet the rush of the other man, who was coming toward him, with oaths falling from his lips.

They met with a shock and became locked in each other's embrace. Around the room they struggled, panting, sweating, each striving for an opening that would give him an advantage. Their nostrils were distended as they gasped for breath. They clawed, bit and scratched. Billy, smaller and physically weaker than his companion, felt his strength giving way. He realized the only chance left was in bolting. Playing for time, he began to plan carefully, knowing that the slightest misstep would mean disaster.

The air was getting thick with smoke. Billy's eyes burned, and his throat was parched as he breathed in the heated air. The cabin was burning briskly.

The thought made him desperate. In a supreme effort, he fell to his knees, grasped his antagonist by the ankles, and jerked. It took all the strength he had left, but the big man gave way and fell to the floor as Billy sprang free and dashed for the door. Frantically he pulled at it. The door was barred.

He turned to the window and reached it in a bound. The slats nailed over it had been burned almost away. The whole aperture was filled with flame.

"There's just one chance left," Billy gasped, "but here goes."

He flung himself into the air, directly at the burning window. There was a crash as the burned slats gave way. The next moment his feet touched the ground, his knees gave way, and he fell sprawling.

As he arose again, a heavy hand fell upon his shoulder. Looking up he saw a man who was dressed as a farmer, and a short distance away were four or five others. The man holding him was shaking his shoulder viciously and saying

(Continued on page 8.)

The Mandalore Princess

-:- Or, -:-

The Great Ruby of Roo

By Will Gage Carey

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CHAPTER XIII.

THE chamber we beheld ahead of us was like some great cathedral. The ceiling was fully seventy feet high, and composed, apparently, of black gypsum, studded with silver points which glittered like diamonds. In some portions this ceiling arched upward into rounded domes of immense height, from which extended dazzling white stalactites, like inverted candelabra, the effect being magnificent and awesome.

The whole place glowed and radiated light as tho some new and startling means of electrical illumination were employed. This we could not comprehend; surely no rift in the high-vaulted roof could let in light sufficient, even on the sunniest day, to create any such magical effect. We crawled farther in; then the secret of the wonderful play of light was made plain. Around the entire area of floor space yawned a crater-like abyss, from the depths of which came the roar of mighty, unquenchable, subterranean fire! The flames seemingly lacked considerable of reaching to a height even with the floor of the cathedral, but the glare from the raging furnace produced an illumination of the whole vast interior amazing to behold. The temperature around about us was raised to some extent by this border of sunken fire, but not to the degree one might expect.

"It's wonderful, Ransom!" I whispered. "But how do you know for certain this is the temple for which we came in search?"

"It must be," he answered. Then, a new sight catching his eye, he added quickly: "If you have any doubt about it, look over there." He pointed to the far end of the cathedral, and a little to the left of the center. There, prone upon the floor, lay an immense idol; gleaming with robes, or mantle, of woven gold, glittering with jewels, immense, imposing even in its fallen state—the figure of a woman!

"The Goddess of Khan!" exclaimed Ransom.

I looked first at him, then at the prostrate idol, in utter amazement.

"But I don't understand," I began, "what has happened ——"

"It's plain enough," broke in Ransom. "You remember the earthquake shock we encountered upon our arrival here?"

"Naturally."

"Well, that quake toppled the Goddess of Khan off her pedestal! As yet, apparently, the frightened Zanoras have feared to approach their fallen idol; but take it from me, son, there's going to be some scandalous doings in this old cave soon as they get their nerve back!"

His words recalled to my mind a certain reference he had made to a former earthquake upon Zanora, and the rites the natives performed at that time to guard against a similar shock. I reminded Ransom of his promise to tell me more of the particulars of that former tragedy.

"Well, it was ten years ago, as I told you," he began. "A terrible earthquake shook things up around here lively; the Zanoras were frightened most to death. They believed that their idol—the Goddess of Khan over there on the floor—was angry with them about something; that it was her that shook the ground up so in her rage and fury. So they had to hunt up a sacrifice to appease her wrath."

"A sacrifice! What kind?"

"Same old stuff they always pull. The most beautiful maiden on the whole island was the poor, innocent victim of these superstitious, fanatical Zans."

"You mean ——"

"I mean that a beautiful young girl was dragged here to this temple—left in here all alone for three long days without food or drink—to make peace with the one-eyed idol. Then the Zans came back, dragged the poor girl up to the feet of the idol, and with naked swords ——"

"Oh, horrible, horrible!" I broke in. "And now that there has been another earthquake there will be another sacrifice?"

"That's the program, Harold," he answered, "beyond any possible doubt."

The thought made me shudder.

"There is sure to be another sacrifice," he went on. "Only this time, the goddess having got so peeved she keeled clean over, they'll likely add a few extra trimmings to the ceremonial soiree. They'll go at it right this next time—to square things with Khan for bumping her bean ——"

He stopped short as a strange sound reached us—dim, muffled, distant—a low, weird, droning chant, and by voices which seemed numberless! The sound became clearer, more distinct.

Now the shrill notes of women were added to the deep voices of the men; they were drawing nearer. I grasped Ransom's arm.

"It's the Zans!" I exclaimed. "They are coming to their idol!"

We stood listening. Suddenly Ransom turned to me, his eyes shining. "You stay here, Harold," he said, fervently. "I'm going to leave you for a few moments."

I attempted to clutch hold of him. He eluded me and hastened on down the narrow stone corridor.

"Ransom!" I shouted. He gave no need. Then at a turn in the corridor he called back: "Keep your eyes open, matie; and if any danger threatens I'm not hep to, you can warn me."

"Ransom ——"

Again he stopped.

"As you said, Harold," he called, "the Zans are coming back to their idol; and I am going to beat 'em to it!"

CHAPTER XIV.

UHGANTII, ruler of Zanora, was more demon than man; more beast than human! He was strong, with the savage strength of some wild animal; cunningly alert, in a way, but it was the low, sneaking craftiness of a madman. He had the will, the innate power of a conqueror of men; and he possessed all the greed, lust and sensual cruelty of a Roman emperor of an early day. Feared by his courtiers, despised by his subjects, he nevertheless held undisputed sway over the island of Zanora. He crushed, maimed, murdered, right and left, as best suited the dark purposes of his evil mind. In short, Uhgantii, ruler of Zanora, was a "bad egg"; and no one yet ever succeeded in bettering to any great extent the peculiar innermost nature of a bad egg.

One thing only ever made Uhgantii do something against his own will—superstition! He feared the Goddess of Khan; nothing else on earth, either mortal or inanimate. He believed that the big golden idol in the temple had the power to bring about his own downfall; for this reason he obeyed to the letter every precept handed down from the Dark Ages relative to the rites and ceremonies due this exacting female.

It was for this reason alone—no sense of true religious feeling and fervor—that caused him to gather his subjects about him, and to proceed with them, with chant and mournful dirge, to the place of the dethroned goddess; and it was likewise at this same, precise moment that my matie, Ransom, was hastening to reach the goddess. His purpose, needless to say, was scarcely produced by religious fervor, either; he desired nothing more nor less than to poke the lady's eye out!

The procession outside was growing nearer, slowly but surely; in another moment they would surely make their entrance into the temple from some opening as yet undisclosed to us. Would they burst in of a sudden, and, seeing Ransom, pounce upon him and rend him limb from limb, while I stood impotently looking on?

And now the dirge and chanting ceased; from a low wide gallery just back of the pedestal where the great idol had stood, the forces of King Uhgantii were entering.

My eyes were turned again toward Ransom. He had reached the idol; he stood stooped over the glittering head; beholding the armed horde of Zans entering the temple, he sank down flat in the shadow of the prostrate form.

Unfortunately, the Zans were advancing toward a point directly between Ransom and the shadow of the colonnade along which he passed in reaching his present position. My heart was in my throat. If they continued on in this direction without stopping, nothing could save my hidden matie!

In they pressed, a dark, fearsome avalanche. Suddenly those in front paused; the throng spread out in fan-like formation, thus giving those still outside opportunity to crowd their way in. It was at this momentary period of hesitation and disorder that Ransom chose to arise and risk a run for the shadows of the colonnade. Could he make it unseen by those hawk-eyed islanders? It seemed, from where I stood, hardly possible; and yet—yes, now he was gone from my sight and theirs; he was safely within the protecting shadows. In another moment he was at my side, panting for breath, but safe and sound.

"Good boy, Ransom!" I exclaimed feelingly. "Tell me, did you get the ruby?"

He shrugged his broad shoulders deprecatingly.

"Naw," he answered, in tones of disgust, "not yet! I was too late. The old girl is blind as a bat!"

CHAPTER XV.

PRESENTLY, becoming more accustomed to the presence of the Zans, and thus more daring, we began creeping back along the darkened colonnade, finally taking our positions behind a great projecting rock fronting the pedestal, before which Uhgantii and his subjects had gathered. And now I had a double surprise: first, when I noticed the marvelous acoustic properties of the cathedral; every word uttered by the King and those he addressed was as plain as tho spoken but a few feet away from us. Secondly, the language used by these terrible cannibal islanders was our own!

I whispered to Ransom: "They speak English. How can that be?"

"Missionaries."

"On the island now?"

"No; they have departed."

"When?"

"Long ago; it was during a certain year—of famine!"

Under the direction of a slim young Zan, a gang of workmen were busy placing huge grapevine ropes about the fallen idol, preparing to raise her to the pedestal once more.

While these preparations were being made, Uhgantii—a great, powerful hulk, yet not without a certain dignity of demeanor and manner—stood a little to one side, his courtiers gathered around him. He looked worn and weary, evidently the work of the quake. The fallen idol had brought to him more mental anguish and distress than he had ever before known. Flitting to and fro before the King, with strange, grotesque movements was a small, misshapen figure attired in bright colors of a very astonishing variety and array.

"Looks like a scared chameleon chasing across a rainbow!" Ransom whispered, commenting on this most singular of Uhgantii's attendants. "What do you reckon he is?"

"Well, in olden times," I answered, "any king worth while had a court fool, or jester. Of course, this bright-hued gink isn't exactly similar; but I imagine he's a sort of favorite with the King. Look! He follows Uhgantii's every movement like a faithful dog; he seems to plead to his master for a little notice—a kind word!"

The dwarfish head, we could see, was covered by a close-fitting, three-cornered cap with bells upon it. These tinkled merrily as the wearer hopped quickly about, the sound creating a strange contrast with the general air of depression and melancholy which seemed to hang like a pall over the assembly.

To this strange personage the King turned frequently, addressing some remark to him, as he stood there waiting for the workmen to get things in readiness for raising the great idol. Instead of being a jester, as his appearance might indicate, he was evidently a counselor on whose words of wisdom the King placed great weight. His name was Jader, so we learned; and in the fierce tragedy soon to take place on that turbulent island of Zanora, none was to play more tragic a role than that taken by poor little Jader, the King's favorite!

It was an impressive scene; the great natural auditorium, lighted by the reflection of raging subterranean fires; the fierce, savage Zanoras, for the moment silent and subdued, obsessed with superstitious fear in the presence of the prostrate Goddess of Khan. The hideously painted warriors seemed wholly out of harmony in such a gathering of sorrowing worshipers; but we knew that it would take but little to change them back from tranquil devotees at the shrine of Khan to their more habitual state of ravishing demons, seeking whom they might devour!

As we watched them, we began wondering what would follow the raising of the idol to the high pedestal. Was the life of an innocent young girl even at this moment trembling in the balance? Had she already been chosen—been singled out to be slain, an innocent sacrifice to the heathen rites of these fanatical Zan zealots? We had not much longer to wait, or to wonder.

Suddenly King Uhgantii turned to the workmen gathered around the idol.

"Come now, you drones and tortoises!" he shouted. "Is that business there about finished?"

"Ready right now, your majesty!" responded the slim young Zan in charge.

The workmen fell back, straining and pulling upon the ropes. Slowly the heavy, golden-robed idol raised from the stone floor. A great anthem of praise and thanksgiving arose from the vast multitude.

In another moment the Goddess of Khan—blind, but still imperiously dominant—settled back serenely upon her pedestal. Uhgantii, King of Zanora, turned to a group of bowmen standing a little to one side.

"Archers," he called to them in a hoarse voice, "bring in the sacrifice!"

CHAPTER XVI.

THERE are times, I think I am safe in saying, when one can, for the nonce, become so absorbed in the affairs of those about him, as to lose track entirely of such details and eventualities pertaining more particularly to his own existence. So it was with me now.

In awaiting the appearance of the sacrificial victim, in the thought of the dreadful torture in store for the poor innocent maiden, who must die merely because of being the most beautiful upon the whole island, the realization of our own supreme danger and predicament was lost entirely. Even the poignant disappointment that the great ruby was nowhere to be found, after all we had risked to obtain it, now was forgotten. That we were helpless captives, as well, unarmed, with only a scant supply of food, with death from starvation actually facing us—all this, I say, I had no thought of now; and I dare say it was the same with Ransom.

The shrinking, terrified maiden sacrifice was to be brought in at once!

What would she be like? Would Fate be merciful to her, and bring the end swiftly; or, like the former earthquake offering, would she be left to wander about in a dull stupor of fear and torment for three days. Would it be possible for us to render her any aid, to effect her rescue—we, who were so impotently helpless to aid ourselves?

The squad of archers, on their way out to execute Uhgantii's order, passed along not far in front of us; and now we saw that the captain of the archers was none other than the gigantic warrior who had been sent flying off down the trail from our cavern by Ransom's sudden, inappropriate but wholly unintentional sneeze. At that time he had seemed of terrifying mien and aspect; now, however, as he passed close to King Uhgantii, he seemed almost insignificant by comparison, such was the King's herculean size, and the sinister, ferocious cast of the ruler of Zanora's countenance.

The archers vanished thru a narrow

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exit. A hush fell over the vast assembly, King and courtiers, warriors and faithful subjects awaiting—as did Ransom and I—the appearance of the human sacrifice, soon to be offered to appease the wrath of the stricken goddess.

Suddenly the multitude broke into a mournful dirge, high and shrill, which must have brought added terror to the heart of the victim, whom the archers were now bringing in.

They came striding forward—stolid, indifferent, their dark faces void of emotion, even of interest, apparently, in the blood-curdling drama about to be enacted. Close in their wake stalked their captain—and by his side, the victim!

She walked all unsupported, her eyes lowered, her arms folded pitifully upon her breast. Her long, dark hair hung down her back, and over her bare shoulders. From time to time the slim girlish figure seemed to sway, as tho about to droop and fall; but no tender hand reached forth either to comfort or sustain her.

The voices of the chanters grew softer, then fainter and more faint, until finally the sound died away entirely. A silence as of a sepulcher now hung over all.

The grim procession passed on in, and passed the royal group. I noticed that King Uhgantii stood with face averted, not deigning to look toward the little trembling captive in white.

Had he then, after all, a heart—some slight semblance to compassion and humanity? Would he turn, presently, and, stricken with pity, raise a hand to stop the horrible orgies? He seemed to falter, to hesitate with some such purpose in mind, but it came to naught. The procession passed slowly on by, and came to a stop directly in front of the golden idol.

Here the white-robed victim turned and faced directly toward us. I heard Ransom give a sudden gasp; he clutched my arm until the pain came.

"Look!" he exclaimed, "it's her, sure as shooting!"

I could only gaze in wonderment, not comprehending.

"'Her'! Whom do you mean, Ransom?" I asked.

"Surely you must recognize her—the sacrifice there."

"Yes—well?"

"It is the woman you told me of! It is the Princess of Mandalore!"

CHAPTER XVII.

ABSORBED as we were in the scene before us, we realized now that it would be no longer safe to remain where we stood. The throng was beginning to spread out more and more; to assume a circular formation before the great idol and the slender offering, where they could hear and behold all. This brought us in too close proximity to the outer edge of the throng; our presence might be detected there at any moment. Reluctantly, then, we began creeping back thru the shadows to the point upon which we had first emerged on discovering the temple.

How strangely the threads of Fate were being woven around us! I had created, from sheerest fancy, a princess; had given her form and being; thrust upon her an olive complexion, hazel eyes; and now, here upon this cannibal island, we encountered the very personage I had formed from mere imagination! Eyes, hair, weight—everything corresponded to the remotest detail. No wonder that Ransom believed the poor little frightened victim of voodoism to be none other than the fanciful Princess herself.

"Harold," he began, when we reached a place of greater security, "you certainly gave a true description of that lady to me back there in Hong-Kong. I never knew you were so good a describer."

"Well," I answered modestly, "I think myself I did pretty well. Of course, I wanted you to have as accurate a picture of the Princess as possible."

"There's jest one point you were off on, tho."

"So?"

"Yes; I think her eyes are jest a wee bit darker than what you said; but I—I think I like 'em that way."

"Which way?"

"Why, the way she wears 'em—the Princess!"

"Oh!"

Ransom was clearly hard hit; it was amusing to watch him, to hear him raving like a lovelorn loon already.

"Harold," he said, "I have a confession to make to you."

"A confession! What about?"

"Well, until jest a few moments ago, I didn't believe there was any such person as the Princess of Mandalore!"

My astonishment was unfeigned.

"You didn't!" I exclaimed. "Then why did you ——"

"I consented to come with you because I wanted to help you get the ruby; because I feared that if I didn't you would go alone—and get your quick finish!"

Verily this was a mix-up. When I thought I was fooling him, in reality, he was fooling me; and vice versa. And now that he was actually being deceived, he wanted to apologize to me about the whole affair; for suddenly he resumed:

"Now, that jest shows, Harold, how one can do another an injustice; I sure thought you were lying to me about the Princess."

"Why, Ransom, the idea!"

"And now, old mate, I want to know if you will forgive me?"

I hesitated. "Well, Ransom," I said, at length, "it's a bad thing to have one's word doubted."

"I know it is; it's bad."

"Still, I don't know as I should hold it against you always," I added generously. "I feel cut up about this thing, but ——"

"But you will overlook it this time?"

I reached over and clasped his proffered hand.

"Yes, Ransom," I responded, "you have apologized like a man for having doubted me in this matter, and so, for my part, I forgive you freely."

This matter thus settled to our entire mutual satisfaction, we turned our attention once more to the Zans.

"Look!" exclaimed Ransom, "they're leaving!"

It was true. Led by King Uhgantii, courtiers, subjects and tribesmen were rapidly pressing on out from the cathedral.

And there at the feet of the blind idol lay a small, pitiful figure in white, motionless, inert—the little "Princess," a sacrifice to the wrath of the offended gods!

CHAPTER XVIII.

NOW'S our time!" said Ransom.

"Yes," I agreed. "It is now or never."

We started back cautiously toward the idol; then a thought came to me, and I stopped abruptly.

"Wait, Ransom," I protested. "We must first ——"

"'Wait'!" he exclaimed almost savagely. "We can't wait for anything now, man. Any moment the Zans—some of 'em—are liable to come back in!"

"I know," I answered, "and it is for that very reason we must be prepared for them. We've got to fix this entrance to the cavern so that we can stop it up quickly, if pressed by our enemy." I turned back toward the narrow, tunnel-like opening. "Come on now, Ransom," I called, "help me roll these bowlders in place; we'll have things ready so that we can, if necessary, make this hole air-tight in a jiffy!"

He looked first at the white-robed figure, then at me in mutinous manner, his anxiety well-nigh getting the better of his judgment. Finally, however, he came running after me.

"Let's get at it, then!" he exclaimed fervidly. "We have not a moment to spare."

We worked in furious haste, toiled and tugged and lifted till the sweat stood out upon our foreheads in drops; but we got that tunnel in such shape that by rolling one huge bowlder down into place, the opening would be practically sealed. Then Ransom straightened up, and started off toward the blind goddess at a pace so fast it was only with difficulty that I could keep up with him. In another moment we were kneeling over the little prostrate form.

She had merely swooned, but it was a swoon so deep, brought about by her overpowering fear and horror of her fate, that she seemed now rather in the slumber of death itself. I stooped over with Ransom to raise her; but his strong arms were already around her, and he declined my aid.

"Light as a feather, she is, Harold. I'll carry her alone. You bring up the rear, and keep your eyes open for danger."

It is well for us that my whole attention was given thus to watching; for suddenly I detected a suspicious movement in the shadows of the colonnade. We were being followed!

Ransom was already hurrying as fast as it seemed possible for one to do so burdened. For a moment, then, I said nothing to alarm him, but merely kept my eyes on the shadowy colonnade as I ran after him. But impending peril was upon us! A shriek, a mingled war cry and a shout of vengeance and anger combined rang out; and from out the shadows dashed full upon us a dozen or more frenzied Zanoras.

No need for me to warn Ransom now; the echo of that first blood-curdling cry still rang thruout the whole chamber, taken up from all parts, until it seemed that all the fiends of an inferno were shrieking forth their hate at us.

They were warriors, our pursuers; but, luckily for us, were without either bows or lances, having no suspicion, at first, of an enemy lurking within the sacred portals of their temple. But even tho they were unarmed, they were brawny and muscular, and now wrought to such a pitch of intense anger at us, that, should we be overtaken our fate would be sudden, swift and certain.

Now, in a straight-away race, no two white men could expect to outrun a pack of savages; at least, not unless the two were scared to such extent that their sprinting powers became something truly marvelous; and we two were scared now to just that extent!

For my part, I ran as I never believed it was possible for me to run; ran in leaps and bounds that fairly kicked the yards out behind me; and yet, even so, I was wholly unable to catch up with Ransom, burdened as he was!

Oh, it was a race! We seemed, for a while, to be holding our own; then surely, grimly, they began gaining.

Now their horrid yelling had stopped; their every energy was spent in striving to lessen the distance between us; to get their maddened clutches upon us, that they might rend us limb from limb.

My heart thumped against my side until I felt that I must faint with pain; and ahead of me I saw Ransom begin to slacken, to stagger. The pace was surely killing us off.

And then—an agonized groan escaped my lips; for there, twenty yards in front of me, I saw Ransom stumble, then fall headlong; and the white-clad burden rolled from his arms.

This highly interesting story will be continued in next week's Ledger. Do not miss reading it. A lot of great and timely stories will appear in the Ledger during the coming months. Send in your subscription and you will find yourself repaid ten times over.

* * *

When Ma Was Sick.

It was Sunday morning. Pa Jenkins, wearing a kitchen apron, shirt sleeves rolled up, and his arms covered to the elbow with flour, stood at the kitchen table trying to make bread. Ma sat nearby and directed the operation.

"To think I had to go and slip and break that arm on a Saturday," bemoaned Ma, gazing disapprovingly at her bandaged right arm, "and leave us without any fresh baking for Sunday."

"Well, your little old William is on the job," cheerfully quoth Pa. "S'long's I've got any muscle we'll have bread." He kneaded with energy.

"You must not work it as hard as that," declared Ma. "Now cut it into pieces and make loaves, and then it'll have to rise again. No—not like that. That won't make a nice-shaped loaf."

"What's shape if it's good to eat?" inquired Pa. "You just stop worrying, Ma. Everything's going to be all right, and you'd better lie down a while. Soon's I get this dough stuff off my hands I'll make the beds."

"I do hope nobody'll come in today," fussed Ma, thinking of the undusted house and her inability to provide refreshments. Pa meant well, and was more than willing to "do his durndest," but of course he couldn't do things right.

And company came! Word had gone abroad that Ma Jenkins had suffered an accident, so everybody called—all the neighbors and club ladies and members of the Ladies' Aid, and the minister's wife and mother-in-law.

Some brought flowers and others brought such substantials as healthy-looking veal loaf, two beautiful loaves of homemade whole wheat bread, a couple of pans of home-baked rolls, a huge loaf of white bread, a plateful of luscious-looking currant jelly tarts, glasses of jelly and jars of fruit and cookies galore. Besides the flowers and the "eats," all brought condolences and thrilling tales of accidents that happened in other families, related with much painful detail.

Finally the callers had all departed except one middle-aged, plainly gowned woman whose limousine was waiting for her. She was a member of Ma's church—a wealthy woman who seldom had anything to say, and who, rumor said, had started life in very poor circumstances.

She had brought neither flowers nor cakes, and while others talked she sat silent, looking her sympathy for Ma. When they were alone—Pa had gone down cellar to attend to the furnace—she began to speak, hesitatingly, as if it was difficult to find words to express her feelings.

"I didn't know there'd be so many callers, right away," said the rich woman. "And I didn't think of bringing anything—like the rest did. I'm rather slow thinking about things that way. But I did think that I might come in and 'fix up' your house. I'm good at that."

"Now, that's kind of you," answered Ma, "but Pa's awful handy around the house."

"But a man isn't like a woman to do things," answered the caller, "and I know how a woman feels about her house. Now, there's the kitchen floor. Couldn't I scrub that for you? Let me be of some use."

"I was simply dumfounded," said Ma to Pa, afterward. "But she really meant it. And she's going to send one of her maids over tomorrow to stay as long as we need her. Now, who'd think a woman as rich as that would want to scrub my kitchen floor for me?"

"Even money can't keep a good heart down," sentimentally stated Pa. "Say, that was a dinged good batch of bread I turned out all-right-all-right, now wasn't it?"

* * *

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The South Grove Mystery

By J. Breckenridge Ellis

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CHAPTER XVIII.

WHEN, for the second time, the detective knocked at Mrs. Dubois' door it was after 9 o'clock, and he was obliged to wait several minutes before the door opened. When it did so, he saw by a dim hall lamp that the lady was very hastily attired.

"Oh, it is again Mr. Zellers," she drawled, taking no pains to show her surprise and lack of interest. "Dear me! Had I dreamed of this, I should have waited to make my toilet more complete. Pamiston bores me to death when I have no one to cheer me up, so I always go to bed with the birds."

"Please make no apologies," said the detective. "May I come in for a half-hour's chat with you?"

"Really, Mr. Zellers," she hesitated, "it is almost as much as your life is worth."

"I take all risks," he smiled, and she stood aside.

"Go in the front room," she told him. "I must throw something about my shoulders in order not to take cold or give you one."

When she joined him, he was seated by the closed window, his hands resting lightly upon his knees, his long legs stretched out before him.

"Mr. Zellers," she said, standing in the doorway, "I do not understand the object of your visit. I told you at our former meeting all that I can tell you that could be of any possible degree of interest, for I dare not pride myself that you have come here on my personal account, either to attempt to reform me to the conventional ways of the world, or to risk the snuffing out of your own highly respectable moral light."

"Will you not be seated, Mrs. Dubois?"

"Where would you have me seat myself?"

"To that I should say neither at the extremity of the room, nor by my side on this divan, but at a medium distance, if you will so far accommodate me."

She sank gracefully upon a chair not far away, and turned to him an unruffled and exceedingly pretty countenance. "And what now?"

"Mrs. Dubois, I have not come here to ask you anything, nor to hope to surprize from you any information. My visit is that of a beggar. I have come to ask you to do me a great favor—a signal favor—a favor that will be fraught with some inconvenience to yourself and possibly some danger."

"You will, of course, explain why I should do you this favor, considering that we are practically strangers and I owe you nothing?"

"It is because we owe each other nothing that I call it a favor."

"And pray, what have you done for me that I should favor you?"

"Absolutely nothing, Mrs. Dubois. I base my expectations of your compliance simply upon the hope that the favor I propose you to bestow may strike you as a pleasing adventure."

"Ah, that is a different thing—a very different thing. If it is a pleasing adventure, count upon me, even if the adventure results in doing you a favor. But I fear my views of what is and is not a pleasing adventure are not your views, my dear sir."

"You shall judge in the present case. I want you to dress yourself as a man and come with me upon an expedition in the morning in search of Tad Walsh, the sheriff's son, who, as you know, has unaccountably vanished and who, as you may naturally suspect, is in danger of being murdered by the negro he has undertaken to follow and watch."

Mrs. Dubois' ready tongue failed her for once. She sat staring at the detective with round eyes.

"Will you do it?" he asked persuasively. "I happen to have come upon a clew that leads me far away in search of Tad. I want you to help me. And I want nobody to know about it except Doctor Free, who is also going. And I want you so to disguise yourself that Doctor Free, supposing you to be a man, will not dream of your true identity."

She roused herself. "You will have to make the whole thing clearer to me before I could consent to so preposterous an outing."

"Very good. It is possible that an unscrupulous criminal is in this town watching every move I make. If I leave town and this criminal learns of it, he might get word to Tuck, who might in that case make short work of poor Tad. Therefore I do not want anybody to know I am leaving Pamiston. But I must take Doctor Free with me, as a man I can trust, for I have reason to believe I shall need not only a trusty ally, but a physician. Also, I shall need one other person; I shall need this other person to be one who will act according to instructions and who will be discreet. So I come to you."

"But why to me? What reason have you for believing that I am to be trusted, or that I shall be discreet? I am sure discretion has not been the better part of my valor in years past."

"My dear Mrs. Dubois, I trust you—isn't that enough?"

"No, it is not enough."

"But does not the idea of masquerading as a man appeal to you?"

"It does appeal to me. But all the same I can see that you have a hidden purpose under all this, and I shall not go upon an adventure the half of which is so artfully concealed from me."

Keeneyes hesitated. Then he resolved upon a bold stroke.

"Mrs. Dubois, you force my hand. Very good. I count upon your excellent practical sense to help me in my dilemma. I must tell you, then, that I desire to take you with me primarily because I should rather have you with me than against me."

"And why do you take for granted that I'd be against you? How could I have known anything about the matter without your own explanation?"

"You see, madam, we may be obliged to have telegrams forwarded."

"Oh, oh!" she cried, laughing. "And to keep Bob Oyler from telling me secrets, you want to carry me off where Bob Oyler can't betray you to me?"

"You have not stated the matter fairly. Rather than leave you here for the telegrapher to tell you our secrets, I prefer to take you with me, if you will consent, and tell you those secrets myself. If I confide in you, you will do me no injury. But if I try to keep you in the dark, and you make discoveries [illegible] Bob Oyler, you might do us very [illegible] harm from the mere triumph of getting the better of us."

She laughed again musically.

"You are a quite wonderful detective," she declared. "You even understand women! Well, well, tell me what I am to do, and I will agree to go with you."

CHAPTER XIX.

THE next morning before it was daylight, Richard Zellers — otherwise known as Keeneyes—quietly left his hotel without attracting any attention, and briskly walked away from Pamiston.

At the end of five miles he reached the station above Pamiston, and when the "seven o'clock passenger" stopped there, he boarded it. He carried a medium-sized suitcase, which he placed on a seat, after which he casually made the tour of the two coaches which constituted the passenger accommodation of the "local."

He found Doctor Free almost at once, but did not indicate in his very brief nod that he felt any satisfaction in the discovery. Doctor Free, understanding that he was to appear guileless in the matter, also assumed an air of aloof disinterestedness. At the same time the physician believed the detective excessively and foolishly cautious. It might be all very well for no one in Pamiston to learn of their errand, tho he did not know precisely why; but on the train, what was there to fear? What or whom did Keeneyes suspect? Doctor Free had no idea. Keeneyes had declared that if their mission were known, it might result in great danger to the boy, Tad Walsh—possibly cost him his life. But how? In what way? Doctor Free gave it up.

In the next car, which was the smoker, Keeneyes found Mrs. Dubois, but certainly if he had not believed she would be on the train, and if he had not understood that she would be disguised in man's clothing, he would have passed her by without suspicion. Knowing what he did, it was still difficult to recognize the beautiful woman in her garb of traveling salesman, and might not have done so if she had not bestowed upon him a sly wink.

Keeneyes did not return the wink. He merely looked gravely at Mrs. Dubois, examining her attentively, then stopped beside her in the aisle.

"Excuse me," he said hesitatingly, "but isn't this Mr. Livermore?"

"It is," replied Mrs. Dubois, taking her cigarette from her mouth and staring suspiciously at Keeneyes.

"Billy Livermore?"

"Just so," returned the man-appearing lady, "but upon my word I don't know what to call you." And she stroked her false mustache.

"I am Dick Zellers," said Keeneyes; "surely you remember me."

Several of the men smoking near them watched the two with interest. Possibly among them was one, at least, who might have seen Keeneyes in Pamiston, or might recognize him from his pictures in the papers and magazines. For this reason Keeneyes had deliberately given his own name; but in changing it from Richard Zellers to Dick Zellers he hoped to avoid arousing any memories in people who might have forgotten his identity. On the other hand, if he was known to be the detective, the giving of his real name would prevent any unnatural curiosity being diverted toward the pretended traveling man.

"Remember you?" repeated Mrs. Dubois, slowly. "Upon my word I can't say that I do. I meet so many Tom-Dick-and-Harrys in going to and fro, up and down in the earth, that my memory is pretty well worn out." As she spoke, she took her large soft black hat by the brim as if to remove it; but she did not disarrange it by the breadth of an inch, because of the trouble she had had in concealing her heavy tresses under it.

"But surely," protested Keeneyes.

"No, no," retorted Mrs. Dubois, in an admirably deep rough voice, "you don't come any of that game on me. I buy my own cigarettes, and you'll have to do the same." Then she deliberately turned her back upon him and buried her face in the morning paper.

Keeneyes, apparently much crestfallen, went off to a corner by himself, followed by the grins of several smokers, and soon left the coach. When the train stopped at Toxville, each got out as if unaware of the other's presence—Keeneyes, Doctor Free and Mrs. Dubois, who had confessed to the name of Billy Livermore.

Nobody else left the train, and after the mail bags had been thrown on and off, the car pulled out, leaving the three standing in the midst of a desolate landscape. The station was nothing but a box car which had been shunted to the side of the track. Besides this box car, there were three buildings in sight; a general store, a blacksmith shop and a tiny cottage in which the station agent lived with his family. On one side of the track was a boundless prairie, on the other a deep unbroken forest.

The station agent gave the three travelers a curious glance, then went to his telegraph board, and paid them no further attention. Doctor Free regarded the dapper-looking "traveling man" with uneasiness, and glanced at Keeneyes as if to ask his opinion of the stranger's presence there. Keeneyes did not acknowledge the look.

He asked the agent if it was not customary for a hack to come to the station to meet passengers. He learned that there was no hack, that passengers were seldom if ever expected, and that nobody but himself lived closer than three miles. He was also informed that the agent kept no horse, nor did he know where Keeneyes could find one closer than the farmer's, at three miles' distance.

"The best I could do for you," said the agent, "would be to call him up by telephone and ask him to talk to you."

This was done, and after considerable delay, the farmer's son was sent on a horse, leading another, arriving about noon. These two horses were turned over to Keeneyes, and the farmer's son, after having been closely questioned as to the lay of the land—particularly of the forest—went back home. In the meantime Keeneyes had asked the agent as many questions as he could endure about the location of dugouts, feeding-barns, etc., that might be scattered in or beyond the woods, and he had learned a little, but not much.

While all this was going on, Mrs. Dubois in her character as Billy Livermore had perched upon the edge of the platform swinging her legs above the clump of dog fennel, and Doctor Free had watched her suspiciously out of a corner of his eye. The day was warm and balmy, and the sun was sufficiently tempered by a strong south breeze to make the platform a pleasanter resting-place than the hot stuffy box car.

When the farmer's boy had disappeared trudging up the country road, Keeneyes came out of the office to Doctor Free, asking, "Are you hungry?"

"I'm famished," the physician declared.

"So am I," spoke up Mrs. Dubois. "Is there any place in this country where a man can get something to eat?"

"No, Mr. Livermore," Keeneyes responded. "The agent says his wife's sick and can't feed travelers even when she's well. It's against orders."

"Whose orders?" demanded Mrs. Dubois, fiercely.

"His wife's orders. Mr. Livermore, altho you have forgotten me and are unwilling to renew our acquaintance, allow me to present you to my friend Doctor Free of Pamiston. I have some food in my suitcase, and altho you refused me a cigarette, I offer you a crust of bread."

Doctor Free stared at Mrs. Dubois harder than ever. It may be that, unconsciously to himself, he saw something in her face to remind him of other days. At any rate, what Keeneyes had said was surprising enough.

"Give me your crust and say no more about it," returned Mrs. Dubois. "I'm a hungry man, and have no time for politeness. I am willing enough to make your acquaintance, Doctor Free. So you are from Pamiston, are you? I've heard of that place. You have a mystery there, haven't you?"

"Why, yes," said Doctor Free, "we call it the South Grove mystery."

Keeneyes distributed bread among them, then snapped to his suitcase to indicate that that was all they were to have.

"Just so," Mrs. Dubois agreed. "I've read something of it. To my mind it was the sheriff who tried to burn his wife at the stake, and as he didn't succeed in that, he knocked her over the head and shot himself. Isn't that your opinion?"

"Good heavens, no!" ejaculated the physician, staring at the other in the utmost amazement. "Nobody has ever advanced an idea so preposterous. Surely you do not know the people you're talking about."

"But didn't somebody knock Mrs. Walsh over the head, so that she is still unconscious after these days?"

"Yes, but——"

"And if I remember rightly, you yourself declared at the inquest that Mr. Walsh committed suicide."

"True; but what has that to do with what happened at South Grove?"

"How should I know? I am merely bringing an intellect to bear on the known facts, and drawing conclusions. Evidently you have not tried that plan."

Doctor Free flushed with displeasure and turned to the detective. "Mr. Zellers, had we not better go?"

"I think so," Keeneyes agreed. "We can munch on our bread as we ride along."

"And what am I to do?" demanded Mrs. Dubois, in some trepidation.

"My dear Billy," retorted the detective, "as you just now reminded me, you refused me a cigarette on the train; you can hardly expect me now to offer you

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my horse. Doctor, which horse will you take? Let us mount and be off."

Billy Livermore, or Mrs. Dubois, did not in the least understand what was expected of her, but she was convinced that the detective would in some way, impossible for her to guess, look after her interests.

So, altho she felt distinctly lonely as the two men rode away, she was not at all frightened. In the first place, Mrs. Dubois was not easily intimidated; then she trusted the detective; and as a last resource there was the station agent; he was a man if she was not, and if appealed to in extremity would not let harm befall her. Accordingly, she kept her seat on the edge of the platform, staring after Keeneyes and Doctor Free until they disappeared among the tall trees and dense undergrowth of Toxville forest.

CHAPTER XX.

WHEN they had ridden away from the box car station, Doctor Free said to the detective, "What an amazing creature that Billy Livermore is! I declare to you he strikes me as something uncanny, almost ghoulish—I can't say why, either. What do you know about him?"

"Very little; I have met the fellow twice or three times—that is all."

"But his abominable supposition that poor Walsh was the villain in the South Grove mystery and that Mrs. Walsh was the victim—did you ever think of such a shocking absurdity in your life?"

"To be candid, Doctor Free, I thought of that long ago."

"What!" ejaculated the physician, sharply.

They had reached the edge of the forest, and Keeneyes nodded toward a straggling cow path which seemed the only means of penetrating the depths. The doctor rode on ahead, and found himself obliged to watch the way closely, because the branches threatened to strike him from his mount.

Presently he resumed: "But you don't mean to tell me that you believe such an absurdity?"

"Certainly I don't mean to tell you what I believe," retorted the detective, who did not relish being charged with believing an "absurdity." "And I am free to admit that the chances for Billy Livermore's solution are not so favorable as I found them a day ago."

"Then there was a time—as you say, a day ago—when you thought it possible that it was poor Walsh who, in a horribly bloodthirsty mood, threatened to burn poor Mrs. Walsh at the stake?"

"Again I refuse to say what I thought. But I will admit that it looked much more probable yesterday than it does today."

"Would you mind telling me what has happened to change the likelihood?"

"My dear doctor, I must beg of you not to discuss the matter here in the woods. And, if you please, let us not talk at all. Or, should you have occasion to ask me anything, please speak in guarded tones without the mentioning of certain names."

"That is no doubt a wise precaution if, as you seem to think, we may be observed here in the woods. But before we go farther, I'd like your opinion of that Billy Livermore—I mean, why is he hovering about the Toxvillee station? What does he want here? It seems to me he must have left that train simply and solely because he wants to find out what we are up to."

"Possibly—possibly enough. But we must not let him discover our object; we must have nothing to do with him. Let us ride on as cautiously as we can; and if he attempts to follow us, we must contrive in some way to lose him in the woods."

They rode on in silence, following the cow path which had sometimes been used as a wagon road, as could be seen by deep ruts, but had not been so used for a long time, or at any rate, at far distant intervals. The woods were silent save for a few fluttering birds and, now and then, the quick movement of a rabbit or raccoon which, however, seldom showed themselves to the explorers.

The road led directly north, as Keeneyes could readily tell by using his watch face as a compass, and Tad in his letter had instructed him to go north for about four miles.

When he believed about that distance to have been traversed, they came to a clearing in which, exactly in accordance with Tad's letter, there was a badly broken-down shed, which long ago had been used in the feeding of cattle. Bits of corncobs lay where they had lain for years, but there was no sign of recent use of the shed; at least there was no sign to the casual eye.

Keeneyes, after reminding Doctor Free that Tad had told them to expect to reach this "shack," continued:

"Doctor Free, I cannot explain to you just how serious is the danger I anticipate in these quarters, because to do so would involve an explanation of certain suspicions not to be mentioned at the present time. I may be altogether in error, or it may be that I am right, and our lives are in danger by the mere fact of our presence here."

"Very well. I am prepared for any emergency."

"Good—I see you are suitably armed. Now, it seems best for me to part company with you. You will remember that in Tad's letter, he directed me to go two miles from this shack in a direction as he expressed it 'pretty near southeast,' and I'd come to a tree with the bark off and his initials cut on the place; I was to keep right on in a southeasterly direction till I got to a dugout—and I must come quick, with something to eat. This brief note of Tad's gives us the following locations—this shack, the tree with the initials, the dugout. I am going to ask you to remain here, where you can watch this shack; and that you may watch it effectively, I'll ask you to let me lead away the horse with me."

Doctor Free looked disturbed at this proposal. He trusted the detective, and he did not question that Keeneyes thought his plan necessary; but he did not relish being left four miles from the railroad in an unknown forest without his horse. However, he knew the way back, and could walk it safely if necessary. Of course, he answered, if people were spying upon the old shack—tho to save his life he could see no reason for their doing so—he could look on much more safely if his horse were not tethered near to betray him.

"Exactly so," Keeneyes declared. "The horse might neigh or whinny—it would certainly make some movement at the wrong time to attract attention. I realize, Doctor Free, that your position will not be all that could be desired. I would give you the part of riding away with the led-horse, if it were possible for you to accomplish what I hope to accomplish. However, if you refuse to co-operate with me in this plan——"

"I do not refuse. I placed myself under your orders when I came with you from Pamiston; and I do not consider myself justified in refusing to do what you ask, on the ground of not understanding the reason for your proposal."

"Thank you. I wish I could explain, but just now, I cannot. Good-by. Keep yourself carefully concealed in the dense bushes overlooking this clearing. Make no movement that can be avoided. Above all, watch—watch with infinite caution and patience; yes, and I think I may also say, watch with the expectation of seeing a wonderful sight within an hour or two—tho it may be twilight before you discover anything unusual. Be assured of this; that I will rejoin you at dusk—that is, at about 7 o'clock—if not sooner; sooner, much sooner, I hope. But should I not show up at seven, you can know my plans have miscarried. In that case you must walk back to Toxville and explain to the agent that evil has befallen me, and get what help you may."

All this made the physician realize more deeply than before that the detective had embarked upon some exceedingly desperate chance.

Without any show of fear—for he was a brave man and really felt no fear—he agreed to all that was asked of him, and Keeneyes with a wave of his hand rode away, leading the physician's horse.

Presently the last sound of horses' hoofs died away, and Doctor Free was alone in the forest, which, despite the occasional twittering of birds, seemed to close about him with a ghastly silence.

CHAPTER XXI.

KEENEYES realized as he rode away from Doctor Free, leading the physician's horse, that there was much to do before the evening train would leave for home. But if all was not done by eight—the time the train was due to pull out from Toxville—they must simply stay on.

When he was out of sight of the clearing in which stood the feeding-shed he carefully examined the woods on either side. After a while he saw the wide bed of a stream which for a time ran parallel to the faintly marked path he was traveling. The stream was very low, and in some places had dried away, leaving isolated pools of no depth. The

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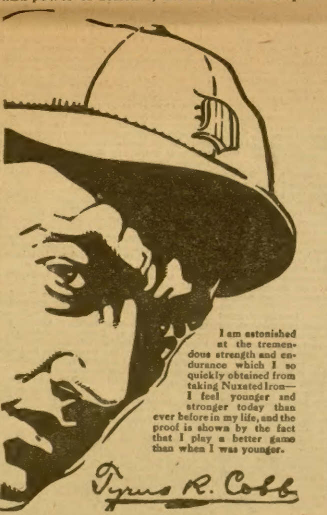

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NEW YORK, N. Y.—When interviewed in his apartment at Bretton Hall, Ty Cobb said: "Hundreds of people write to me to know how I train and what I do to keep up that force and vitality which enables me to play practically every day of the entire baseball season. They wonder why I can play a better game to-day than when I was younger.

"The secret is keeping up the supply of iron in my blood—exactly what everyone else can do if they will.

"At the beginning of the present season I was nervous and run down from a bad attack of tonsilitis, but soon the papers began to state 'Ty Cobb has 'come back.' He is hitting up the old stride.' The secret was iron—Nuxated Iron filled me with renewed life.

"Now they say I'm worth $50,000 a year to any baseball team, yet without plenty of iron in my blood I wouldn't be worth five cents. Nuxated Iron supplies that 'stay there' strength and vim that makes men of mark and women of power." Continuing, Dr. Sauer said: "Mr. Cobb's case is only one of hundreds which I could cite from my own personal experience which proves conclusively the astonishing power of nuxated iron to restore strength and vitality, even in most complicated chronic conditions."

Not long ago a man came to me who was nearly half a century old and asked me to give him a preliminary examination for life insurance. I was astonished to find him with the blood pressure of a boy of 20 and as full of vigor, vim, and vitality as a young man; in fact, a young man he really was, notwithstanding his age. The secret he said was taking iron—nuxated iron had filled him with renewed life. At 30 he was in bad health; at 46 he was careworn and nearly all in. Now at 50 a miracle of vitality and his face beaming with the buoyancy of youth. As I have said a hundred times over, iron is the greatest of all strength builders. If people would only throw away patent medicines and nauseous concoctions and take simple nuxated iron, I am convinced that the lives of thousands of persons might be saved, who now die every year from pneumonia, grippe, consumption, kidney, liver and heart trouble, etc. The real and true cause which started their diseases was nothing more nor less than a weakened condition brought on by lack of iron in the blood. Iron is absolutely necessary to enable your blood to change food into living tissue. Without it, no matter how much or what you eat, your food merely passes through you without doing you any good. You don't get the strength out of it, and as a consequence you become weak, pale and sickly looking, just like a plant trying to grow in a soil deficient in iron. If you are not strong or well you owe it to yourself to make the following test: See how long you can work or how far you can walk without becoming tired. Next take two five-grain tablets of ordinary nuxated iron three times per day after meals for two weeks. Then test your strength again and see for yourself how much you have gained. I have seen dozens of nervous, run-down people who were ailing all the while double their strength and endurance and entirely get rid of all symptoms of dyspepsia, liver and other troubles in from ten to fourteen days' time simply by taking iron in the proper form. And this after they had in some cases been doctoring for months without obtaining any benefit. But don't take the old forms of reduced iron, iron acetate or tincture of iron simply to save a few cents. You must take iron in a form that can be easily absorbed and assimilated like nuxated iron if you want it to do you any good, otherwise it may prove worse than useless.

Many an athlete or prize fighter has won the day simply because he knew the secret of great strength and endurance and filled his blood with iron before he went into the affray, while many another has gone to inglorious defeat simply for the lack of iron.—E. Sauer, M. D.

A good batter must be in prime physical condition—he needs a cool head, a quick eye and tremendous strength to put the swing behind the bat.

Ty Cobb is undoubtedly the greatest baseball player in the history of the game. A short time ago he was weakened and all "rundown"—to-day he is a miracle of strength and endurance, due to filling his blood with plenty of iron. He says Nuxated Iron has given him new life and renewed energy and put the old-time vim and vigor of youth into his blood.

NOTE—Nuxated Iron, recommended above by Dr. Sauer, is not a patent medicine nor secret remedy, but one which is well known to druggists and whose iron constituents are widely prescribed by eminent physicians everywhere. Unlike the older inorganic iron products, it is easily assimilated, does not injure the teeth, make them black, nor upset the stomach; on the contrary, it is a most potent remedy in nearly all forms of indigestion as well as for nervous, run-down conditions. The manufacturers have such great confidence in Nuxated Iron that they offer to forfeit $100.00 to any charitable institution if they cannot take any man or woman under 60 who lacks iron and increase their strength 200 per cent. or over in four weeks' time, provided they have no serious organic trouble. They also offer to refund your money if it does not at least double your strength and endurance in ten days' time. It is dispensed by all good druggists.

general direction appeared to be that toward Toxville, and after going about a mile, and still finding the creek bed in sight, tho at times it wound out of the reach of his vision, the detective tied the led-horse to a tree, rode his horse to the margin of the ravine, and began following it toward Toxville. Evidently he was returning to the station, and wished to do so without advising Doctor Free of the fact.

Sometimes he found the way exceedingly difficult, but for the most part it was easy enough to ride along the bank, or to descend to the very bed of the slender stream and follow that. Since the creek flowed almost due south, without material alteration, he knew he must, in about four miles' space, be close to the Toxville station.

Accordingly, when he had gone what he believed to be four miles, he began looking about the path he had followed thru the forest with Doctor Free, or some other path, or some sign of habitation. Altho he had not noticed the stream on leaving Toxville, he at last discovered where the narrow trail led to the station and he rode thither. Then the box car station came in sight. It was about two in the afternoon, and Mrs. Dubois—or Billy Livermore—was still in plain sight on the platform.

At sight of him she brightened perceptibly, and hurried to meet him, after first looking toward the box station to assure herself that she was not being watched; tho as to that, there seemed no protection from the eyes of the agent, if he cared to look their way.

"Mr. Zellers," she said, being the first to speak, "it is really quite incredibly lonely in this desert."

"Yes—I'm sorry, but it must be so. You needn't be uneasy about the agent's watching us. In fact, I am going to speak to him about you now."

"About me? But you won't tell him I'm not a man?"

"Of course not—you are 'Billy Livermore,' and please don't forget it. I shall instruct him, in case of a telegram coming to me, or a letter—for he is also the postmaster—he is to give the same to you. I'll leave you this horse. As soon as you get such a letter or such a telegram, ride as fast as you can to me with it."

"But where'll you be?"

"How can I tell? You must find me."

"Find you! And all alone in that forest!" she complained.

"You are no coward; I believe in your courage. You were willing for an adventure, and this surely offers your rich food for adventure."

Then he told her about the half-dried-up creek bed.

"Follow that creek bed," he told her, "until you come near a clearing. You can make your way thru the brush to the clearing where an old tumble-down shed is standing. If I am not in that shed, or if Doctor Free is not, you may return to the station, and go home on the evening train without waiting for us to show up."

"But one of you will be there?"

"I hope so. But listen carefully; we may not be in the shed; we may be hiding in the thickets that surround the clearing. Don't let yourself be seen until you find me or the doctor. Approach from the creek bed with exceeding caution. There may be enemies hidden in the old shed."

"Enemies! But, sir, I do not like this plot at all. I am all in the dark concerning it, and it seems there is actual danger."

"Actual danger? You may well suppose so. What is an adventure without danger? But with caution I expect you to go thru with it safely. Mrs. Dubois—I mean, Bill—you are fully armed, aren't you?"

"Yes."

"Very good. And now, right at this point, tell me frankly if you wish to draw out of the enterprise. We need you badly, but if you don't care to go ahead with it, say so, and I'll make other plans."

Mrs. Dubois stood looking at him frowningly.

Presently she said desperately: "You may count on me. I'll go thru with it."

"Very good. That's one reason I selected you—because I felt you to be the sort of person who'd go thru with anything she'd begun. Now I'll go to the agent, and instruct him to consider you my personal representative in all things."

Accordingly, Keeneyes instructed the agent to turn over to "Mr. Livermore" all telegrams or mail that might come addressed to himself; then he came out of the box station, nodded to Mrs. Dubois that all was satisfactorily arranged, and mounted the horse.

Leaving Doctor Free's horse tied to a tree near by for Mrs. Dubois' benefit, Keeneyes hastened back thru the woods until he came to the creek bed, when he continued to advance, but with much greater caution.

When he knew himself to be in the neighborhood of the clearing that surrounded the feeding-shed, he tethered his horse, then, with infinite caution he stole forward thru the bushes and among the dense growth of saplings. He had gone thus perhaps fifteen minutes when he came to a slight opening thru which he was able to obtain a glimpse of the dingy, weather-beaten and roof-sagging cattle-shed. Here he paused and listened intently, wondering if Doctor Free were in his immediate neighborhood. If so, no rustle of leaf or twig betrayed the fact.

Suddenly he heard a sound much louder and far more disconcerting than any snapping of dry branches or rustling of leaves. It was a deep, long-drawn groan. It came from his left, at the distance of perhaps ten yards. Keeneyes slipped slowly in that direction, at the same time watching the cattle-shed and the surrounding clearing.

There was nothing to be seen of unusual nature until he came close to the spot whence the groan had issued. At his close approach, he could see something black and something white thru a close growth of alder bushes. The something black was a man's clothed body. The something white was Doctor Free's face.

Still too cautious to hail him, the detective crept still closer, and with a last parting of the stems of the plants, could see that the physician lay upon his back with his arms pinioned behind him, the rope having been passed several times around his body; the legs were fastened together with one end of the same rope. Except for being thus bound in a most uncomfortable position, the physician did not seem the worse for his hard usage.

Keeneyes at last ventured to whisper: "Don't speak, my dear doctor; don't move. I have come back. Rest just as you are."

Doctor Free had been greatly startled by the unexpected voice, but recognizing it at once and having excellent control over himself, he lay perfectly quiet.

The detective, on hands and knees crawled close to the prostrate physician's head and bent down that they might speak in whispers.

"Is any one near?" he asked. "And is there danger of any one finding me here?"

This story, developing very thrilling happenings, will be continued in the Ledger issue of next week. If you are not a regular subscriber to the Ledger we would like to have your name on our list. The Ledger is only $1.00 per year; it is worth many times that amount. Send in your subscription, for many great stories that you cannot afford to miss will appear during the coming months.

* * *

Stealing the Show.

(Continued from page 3.)

in a voice in which determination seemed to be the chief characteristic:

"Oh, you can't git away, young feller. When we finish with you, I reckon you darned tramps'll stop burnin' barns around these parts."

"What do you mean?" flared Billy, but the farmer cut him short.

"It ain't a-goin' to do you no good to talk. It'll be used agin you at your trial if you do. Whatever you've got to say, jes' save it fer the jedge. He'll be powerful glad to see you, I reckon, seein's he's had a barn or two burned hisself."

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* * *

A DENTIST'S TROUBLES.

"Why, of course, I haven't an appointment!" indignantly admitted the young woman in the tiny hat to the assistant in the dentist's waiting-room. "How could I have one, when Reginald's tooth didn't start aching till this morning? Hush, darling, it'll be fixed soon, now! I'm sure Dr. Yanker will make an exception when it's a patient like myself who has paid him goodness knows how many dollars—and that last filling had to be done over again at that! It won't take him a minute, and as soon as he is thru with the person in the chair——.

"Oh, you say this lady has the next appointment? Well, I am sure she won't mind waiting a very few minutes, especially as it is a little boy who is needing the doctor's attention. You say you have to catch a train? Oh, but trains run so often these days that it surely can't matter——

"Oh, Dr. Yanker! Just a minute, please!" and the young woman, dragging the small boy, vanished thru the door into the private office which the incautious dentist had opened. "I want you to look at Reginald's tooth! Reginald! Don't climb up onto the lady in the chair—she might not like it! Sit there and play with those funny crochet-hook things he isn't using! I'm sure the lady in the chair is almost ready to leave. You've no idea what I've gone thru this morning with Reginald, Dr. Yanker! He's so sensitive that he suffers more than most.

"My goodness, Reginald, what do you mean? No, the lady has her mouth open that funny way because she has too, not because she wants to! I am sure nobody would want to look so dreadful if she could help it! There—she is thru now, and you can get in the chair. Reginald!

"As I was saying, he was just taking the first spoonful of breakfast food when he gave the most awful scream. I was just starting to read the account of that murder and I jumped and knocked over my coffee and that crepe de chine negligee is ruined unless I can have it dyed—and dye costs so much since the war! He said there were hot needles in his teeth! I hate to have him cry so, because it makes his eyes all red, and Reginald has such beautiful eyes! You know yourself, Dr. Yanker, that it isn't often you get the combination of such extraordinary lashes with such large eyes. Every girl with long lashes I have ever known was spoiled by having small eyes or if her eyes were big she didn't have any lashes—that is, none to speak of. Reginald! Where is he? I told him to get in the chair.

"Oh, if he should swallow any poison stuff—tho what dentists need with poison I don't see! Oh, he's killed! That whole case full of teeth and gold and things smashed! What did you hang on to it for, Reginald? Don't you know if it had hit you squarely on the head it might have killed you and mamma wouldn't have had any little boy at all? What would poor mamma have done then?

"Oh, you are ready for him, Dr. Yanker. Reginald, stop crunching that glass stuff with your heel! I know a boy who cut his foot and died of lockjaw and he had on his shoes, too. I suppose there must have been a hole in the sole. But I am very particular that Reginald's footwear should always be perfect, so I suppose there's no real danger——

"Why, Reginald! What on earth makes you act so? Don't you know the doctor can't see in your mouth when you shut it so tightly? He's not going to hurt you, angel—he's going to take out all the hot needles! There, there! Don't yell so! No, he isn't going to pull a tooth, nothing of the sort! He's just going to see what the trouble—Reginald, if you kick that water bowl again I'll have to punish you severely! Don't writhe around so, and open your mouth! Oh, doctor! I'm afraid if you clamp that headrest tight you'll strangle him or something, if he twists around like this! You certainly shall have no dessert for dinner, Reginald, if you won't sit still and let the doctor look!

"Show him which side! Wasn't it this side, darling, where the ache was? He says not—that's funny! Then it's the other side? Tell mother! Why, he says there's no ache there, either! Now pet, listen! Point out to mother the tooth that hurts you! They don't hurt? Not at all? You haven't any sort of an ache in your mouth? Why, isn't that wonderful, doctor? It must be his splendid constitution that enables him to overcome such things!

"Well, of course, since there was nothing for you to do for him, this won't count as a visit, and we'll let the lady in the waiting-room in—Oh, you say she had to leave to get her train? Well, I suppose you are glad to have a breathing spell once in a while with nothing to do, so it's all right! You can get a nice rest before your next patient!

"Come, Reginald. No, I guess the doctor won't mind if you take the magazine with the pretty pictures, because people don't have time to read in a dentist's office, anyhow!"

* * *

A Careful Mother.

"Now it's time for you to start for school, Reggie, darling. Goodby. No, don't kiss me! How many times must I tell you that kissing is insanitary?

"Oh, child, how could you pat the dog? Now we must sterilize your hands all over again and steam them, and then use the antiseptic spray on them. There! Now, here are your antiseptic gloves. Get your hands into them quickly.

"And here's your individual car strap. Be careful not to touch any other.

"Have those shoes been baked since you wore them yesterday? No? Then you must change them. Here's another pair just out of the oven. And here's your slate, dearie. It's been well boiled and afterward baked.

"Now, remember, put on your rubber gloves when working at the blackboard, and use your own cup to drink from, and here's the antiseptic spray to use on your desk.

"And here are two cubes of germicide and a vaporizer. Gargle every even hour from this bottle, and sniff this one every odd hour.

"Here's your doctor's certificate in its antiseptic case. Show it to the teacher if he insists on cutting out your tonsils again, and tell him I'm sure your adenoids have not grown again since your operation last week.

"Now, run along, dearie. Don't breathe when the wind is blowing or any dust flying or any people passing. Don't breathe at all if you can help it.

"Goodby. No, don't touch mother's hand—just wave a farewell. But wave away from yourself, not toward you."

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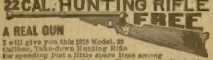

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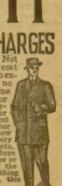


THE FAIRY CORNER

THE MOON AND I.

I saw the moon the other night,
And she was such a little mite!
I saw her 'way down in the sky,
Too young to climb up very high.

And soon she dropped her sleepy head
Below the woods and went to bed.
I'm glad I'm not that baby moon,
Who has to go to bed so soon!

But now, the moon's a lady fine,
With yellow hair and eyes that shine.
She sits up in the sky all night,
Her eyes wide open, shining bright.

I can't sit up like that big moon;
I have to go to bed too soon—
I sometimes think I'd like to be
That lady moon instead of me.

But when it's light, she goes away
And has to lie abed all day;
So after all, I'd rather be
A boy that sleeps at night, like me.

❧

PRINCE BLADUD.

Of all the children of Hudebras, King of Great Britain, best beloved was Bladud. Noble in form and feature, gentle beyond the wont of boys in those far-off days, it was small wonder that he was the idol not only of the court but of the people as well, who looked forward with joy to the time when he should rule over them.

Great was the consternation, therefore, when it became known that the fair young Bladud had contracted the dread disease leprosy, which stalked like a ghost among the rich and the poor of Britain in those times of crude custom and rude living.

So great was the terror felt by the people of leprosy that not a single soul thought for a moment of the possibility of Bladud's staying on at the court, and his afflicted father and well-nigh distracted mother were obliged to accord him the treatment that would have fallen to the lot of the poorest laborer on their farm, had he been unfortunate enough to contract the disease.

Bladud knew that his sentence would be banishment to the wilderness, with all its discomforts and perils, and when his father, assembled with his councilors in session, pronounced sentence of banishment against him he was strong enough to look up with a smile into the beloved face torn with anguish at its unwelcome task.

The smile still lingered on his boyish, disfigured face, and a curiously wrought bracelet given him by his mother, the Queen, safely wrapped in his mantle, Bladud trudged manfully away over the hills and downs of England.

On and on walked the boy, and night had fallen and the moon appeared before he met with a living soul. Then he came upon a shepherd boy watching his flocks in the starlight upon a hilltop. Glad of company to cheer the solitude, the lad welcomed Bladud warmly, giving him water from his flask and food from his pouch.

The eyes of Bladud lingered long on the brown, happy face of the shepherd boy. Here was one, thought he, who was accountable to no man, save his master, for his actions, and assured always of his food, which, tho coarse, was nearly always plentiful.

"What do they call you?" he asked curiously of his companion.

"I am called Math o' the Downs," said the shepherd, carelessly, "and I know a great deal of sheep herding, for my family have been sheep herders for generations."

"Then you must have friends near here," said Bladud. "Think you, Math o' the Downs, that I could also become a shepherd on your recommendation?"

The brown-faced shepherd lad looked up craftily.

"I know you not," said he, "but I pity you. If you really wish to become an honest shepherd lad, you must get rid of your fine and costly garments and dress even as I do. We will strike a bargain an you will. I will give you a sheepskin outfit an you give me the clothes you wear to sell."

"Done!" cried Bladud. "Now instruct me in the duties of a shepherd, my good friend, and recommend me to a master at once."

When morning dawned the boys traveled together from one sheep owner to another without success. No one was in need of a shepherd. Finally Math bethought him of an old man who was in need of a swineherd, and Bladud, glad of any work to keep life in him, did not demur even at this distasteful task.

"Take me to him, Math," said he sorrowfully. "I will even serve him as faithfully as I know how!"

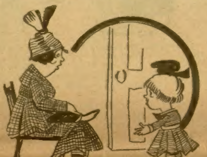
The swineherd took a fancy to Bladud at once and engaged him on the spot. What a change from princely halls was this! How the gentle lad suffered from damp and cold and the coarseness of food and clothing provided for him, as well as from the disease that gnawed at his vitals. But he set his teeth and told himself that things might be worse. One day he noticed one of the swine acting in unaccustomed fashion, and upon investigation saw that it was suffering from the plague with which he was infected.

Weeks passed into months, and to the physical suffering of Bladud was added the mental anguish of the knowledge that the master's pigs were daily becoming weaker. His feverish wanderings led him at last to the banks of the Avon, and a great desire overwhelmed him to drive his grunting charges across and explore the promising hills invitingly outlined against the sky.

Across the River Avon, Bladud lay down under an acorn tree to rest and recover his breath. All at once, when he had fallen partially into a doze, a squealing and scampering of tiny feet reached his ears, and, glancing up, Bladud saw to his horror the full herd of swine forging rapidly toward a little rise in the ground. In a few moments the herd was out of sight, and poor Bladud raced away in the direction they had taken, with a great fear in his heart that the whole herd was bewitched.

Finally he arrived at the top of the rising ground over which the herd had disappeared and looked into a valley. There, wallowing in several springs that gushed from the oozy ground, were the pigs, squealing with delight.

By every means in his power Bladud strove to coax the pigs to their rightful position by his side, but nothing availed for his purpose. The swine refused to be coaxed or cajoled. They refused to be threatened or driven.



The Visitor—"What's that awful screaming?"

Little Lucy Cittikid—"That's our baby paging mamma."

For days and days this continued, until Bladud began to fear that he would never be able to make the herd return whence they had come. One morning Bladud chanced to look closely at one of the largest pigs which had suffered most from the infection of leprosy. To his utter amazement its skin was clear and smooth and no trace of the disease appeared. From one to another he went, and in every case the animals were found cured perfectly.

A hope almost too wonderful for thought sprang up in the heart of the swineherd prince. "Why should not," he reflected, "these baths be as good for me as for these swine? I will give them a trial."

Therefore, next day he went and plunged into a spring that the pigs had not visited and bathed therein. This treatment he kept up for a week at intervals. When at the end of that time he bathed in the Avon he was amazed to see that his skin was as clear as a child's once more.

In all haste Bladud drove his herd back to the hut of the swineherd and told him of his royal birth and of the wonderful thing that had come to pass.

Together the swineherd and the Prince traveled to the royal city, and, altho some were inclined to jeer at the idea that this lad was the disease-infected Bladud, others who knew his features soon recognized him and bade him welcome. The curiously wrought bracelet given him by his mother, the Queen, established his identity beyond all question, and the court celebrated a wonderful feast of thanksgiving, the like of which had never been seen in all the world before. Math o' the Downs was suitably rewarded for his confidence in the young Prince, while the swineherd was made happy and comfortable for life.

When Bladud came to the throne he was one of the wisest kings of Britain of all time, and his reign was long and happy.

❧

IN CAMP.

Three boys from the city were sent to their uncle's farm one summer so that they might work thru vacation and yet have a change from city tasks. They passed much of the time doing the regular farm work with the men—mowing, gardening, raking hay and storing it in the barn, thrashing, milking—all the delightful things one can find to do on a farm. When work lightened about September 1st, the three boys went off to camp on the shore of a lake near the mountaintop, taking with them provisions enough to last for a week. They were driven to their destination by Sambo, the negro boy who did chores. After he helped them to unload he left them, promising to return for them in a week's time.

The boys had only one small tent, not quite large enough for three, but they had brought along three large barrels, and these they used for sleeping rooms, each one curling up comfortably in the blanket inside. They left one head on each barrel and slept with their feet at the closed end. As the nights were cool the protection from the wind was needed, and with boughs and branches they made a guard to keep too much wind from blowing on their heads. Two of the barrels were placed on poles laid on the ground, and one on stones to keep the dampness of the ground away. As a cozy warm bed, yet with plenty of air, the barrel couch proved a great success.

One night a high wind blew the tent up from the ground and off into the lake, scattering the provisions here and there, but the boys never heard a sound of it until one of them received a blow on the head from the piece of bacon that had hung in the tent and was following it thru the air.

❧

WHAT JACK OVERHEARD.

"This cellar is awfully damp," said the Rat-trap. "I'm afraid I'll catch malaria."

"If you don't catch malaria any better than you catch rats, you needn't be afraid," said the Kindling Wood.

"You seem to have a cold," said the Milk Pail to the Refrigerator.

"Yes, in my chest," said the Refrigerator, with a smile.

"I hate being locked up here in this dull place," said the Furnace.

"Oh, I don't think it's so bad," said the Fire.

"It's easy enough for you to talk," said the Furnace. "Fires can go out, but Furnaces can't."

"How did you happen to see all these things you tell us about?" asked the Coalbin of the Saw.

"The same way I saw everything else," said the Saw; "with my teeth."

"I hear you called on the Refrigerator yesterday," said the Woodbox to the Pail. "Were you received pleasantly?"

"No. The Refrigerator treated me with great coldness," said the Pail.

"This house is beautiful upstairs," said the Furnace to the Poker. "The flues are going up there all the time and they told me all about it."

❧

TRY THIS.

Here are twenty-one common words frequently misspelled. Get some one to dictate the following paragraph to you and see how many of them you can spell correctly:

"The privilege of separating ninety miscellaneous calendars, arranged in two parallel lines, was against the principles of the superintendent, so his niece, not to disappoint the Government or cause it to lose business, removed the principal calendars and thus relieved her uncle of a strain which might have brought on a disease. Then she believed it had become truly necessary for her to receive her instruction in grammar."

❧ ❧ ❧

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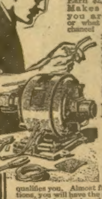

At Home!

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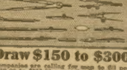

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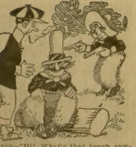


Visitor—"Hi! What's that tough cowboy going to do with those guns?"

Kidder Collins—"Oh, him? He's the new dancing instructor gettin' ready to begin work. Want to join the class?"

The Difference.

"Who is that happy-looking individual over there?"

"His wife is giving a little party tonight for her card club, and he doesn't have to go home."

"And who is the gloomy chap with him?"

"Oh, his house is quarantined and he can't go home."

Fell Some.

Redd—"How are you getting along in the aviation school?"

Greene—"Not very well."

"Head of the class yet?"

"No. I was up near the head yesterday, but fell and went to the foot."

A Long Walk.

Bill Jones, who lived in Chicago, owned a flock of carrier pigeons of which he was immensely proud. His pride led to such continued boasting that it bored, annoyed and peeved his friends. One of these friends, Tom Smith by name, told him one day:

"I have to make a trip from Chicago to Los Angeles, and I'm willing to bet you $100 that I can take one of your blooming pigeons out there and turn it loose and you will never see it again."

The bet was made, and Tom Smith, having arrived within two miles of Los Angeles, clipped the pigeon's wings and threw the helpless bird out of the car window. Thirty days later he returned to Chicago and asked Bill Jones for the stake money.

"You don't win," remonstrated Bill. "That pigeon came home."

"He did!" exclaimed Tom, thoroly incredulous.

"Yes," replied Jones. "But, good gracious, his feet were sore!"

A Kind Act.

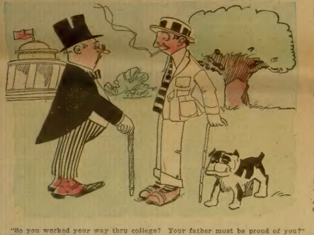
With a "ki-yi" and an aggravating rattle, the scared dog shot around the corner, a tin can hanging from the end of its tail.

The small boy who had fixed the tin can in its place stopped laughing when a stern voice came to his ears.

"William!" It was his father who spoke. "Did you tie that tin can to the poor dog's tail?"

Willie did some rapid thinking. Then he replied, innocently:

"Yes, father, I did. I'm trying to do one kind act every day, and that dog is always chasing cats, so I tied the tin can to its tail so that it would make a noise and warn the poor little cats."



"So you worked your way thru college? Your father must be proud of you?"

"Not much! He's the man I worked!"

Loaded.

"What is this man charged with?" asked the magistrate.

"Dynamite!" was the unanimous reply of six policemen who had made the arrest.

On the Job.

Angry Diner—"Waiter, you are not fit to serve a pig!"

Waiter—"I'm doing my best, sir."

No Extreme Cases.

"What is meant by an embarrassment of riches, pa?"

"That means having more money than you know what to do with."

"Does anybody ever have that much money?"

"No, my son. I dare say there is such a thing as embarrassment of riches, but it never reaches the point where it is painful."

DELIGHTFUL DREAM.

Daily feeling glummer
  O'er the job I face;
I should like to summer
  In a pleasant place.

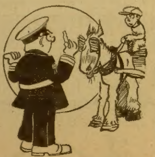
But it turns me yellow
  Thinking where to go;
Hard work for a fellow,
  As you doubtless know.

Not because I'm thrifty
  I dislike to roam.
Wouldn't it be nifty
  Summering at home?

Dead Ones.

Redd—"There are cases on record of lightning flashes striking the surface of ponds, lakes and rivers and killing quantities of fish."

Greene—"Now you see why they don't bite some days at all. They can't."



Crossing Policeman (to halting teamster)—"Well, what are you stopping for? Didn't you hear me blow the whistle to go ahead? What do you want? An engraved invitation to move on?"

All the Same.

One—"Of course they are nice to have, but they are a lot of trouble just the same."

Two (with a sigh)—"Yes, they are."

One—"Cost a bunch of money, too."

Two—"You're right—they do."

One—"'Tain't the first expense one minds—but the upkeep is fierce."

Two—"Don't I know it?"

One—"Always something wrong with the blamed things, and when there is nobody but a specialist can tell what it is."

Two—"That's true."

One—"Still, after you've had one or two of them you couldn't get along without them."

Two (brightening)—"That's what I think. People envy you, too."

One—"Yes, still it's an endless worry keeping them looking trim and shining. And gasoline and tires are going up——"

Two—"Gasoline and tires! Good heavens, man! I thought you were talking about babies!"—Judge.

Dieting.

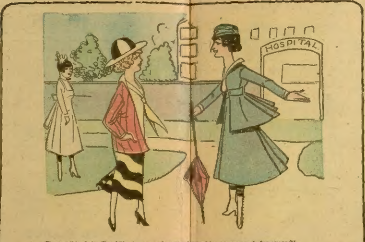
Knicker—"Is Jones on a restricted diet?"

Bocker—"Terribly; he is confined to what he can afford and his wife can cook."—Judge.

Defined.

"Pa, what are sour grapes?"

"Well, my boy, when your mother doesn't win the prize at her bridge club it's always something that she didn't want, anyhow."



Bess—"And is Freddie in any danger from his compound fracture?"

Belle—"Not a bit! His nurse is a fright!"

Worse Than Flint and Steel.

A stupid peasant woman once bought a box of friction matches. The next day she returned to the store where she had made her purchase and complained that the matches would not light when rubbed on the box.

The shopkeeper lighted one of the matches by rubbing it quickly on his trousers leg. "They seem to work all right," he said.

"But I can't use matches like that!" snapped the woman. "Do you think I have time to make a three hours' journey to light the matches on your trousers every time I want a fire?"

Didn't Wish to Stay.

Willie Jones was playing with the Robinson children next door. When luncheon time came Mrs. Robinson asked him if he wouldn't like to stay.

"No, thank you," said Willie, "I think I'd better go home. My mother will be expecting me."

"Suppose I telephone over and ask her if you may stay," suggested his hostess.

"Please don't do that, Mrs. Robinson," said the boy earnestly. "We've got cocoanut pie for dessert today, and your cook told me you've only got prunes."

Summary Discipline.

"So Crimson Gulch has experienced reform!"

"I should say so," replied Bronco Bob. "An' you bet it's the real sincere thing. Piute Pete an' Three Finger Sam is now in the hospital bein' probed fur bullets."

"How did that happen?"

"They would insist on playing cards on Sunday."

Made a Reservation.

Burglar (just acquitted, to his lawyer)—"I will drop in soon and see you."

Lawyer—"Very good; but in the daytime, please."

According to His Taste.

"Why did you get a dark brown suit?"

"I had a dark brown taste the morning I bought it."

Plausible Theory.

"Dubwaite has a horn on his automobile that sounds like the wailing of a lost soul."

"Well, Dubwaite is a temperamental motorist. Maybe he uses the horn to express his feelings whenever he thinks about the mortgage on his home and high cost of gasoline."

How He Fell.

Visitor—"What brought you here?"

Prisoner—"I owe my downfall to a woman."

Visitor—"How was that, my poor man?"

Prisoner—"She yelled for the police."

Popular Slogan.

"Just what is meant by '100 per cent Americanism?'"

"Well, that's rather hard to define, but the average citizen who is running for office these days claims to be chock full of it."

SMART CHAP.

"I'll be your sister,"
  Murmured she.
And then he kissed her,
  Brotherly.

One Thing Puzzled Him.

On one occasion a man helped Edison to erect a miniature electric light plant and when the work was finished he was so delighted that he said to the great inventor:

"Mr. Edison, after working with you like this, I believe I could put up an electric light plant myself."

"Could you, indeed?" said Edison.

"Yes, I believe I could," replied the amateur; but suddenly his face clouded. "There's only one thing that beats me," he added doubtfully.

"What's that?" inquired Edison.

"Well, I don't quite see," answered the budding electrical engineer, looking at the glowing bulb, "how you get the oil along the wires!"

Disappointed.

An officer attached to the White House tells a story of a small boy whom President Wilson encountered at Staunton, Vt.

The President was speaking to a crowd from the steps of a seminary for girls. The boy pushed and shoved his way thru the crowd until he found himself squarely in front of the President, whereupon he shouted excitedly:

"Where is it? Where is it?"

Mr. Wilson stopped his speech and said good naturedly: "Well, my boy, I suppose I am 'it.'"

At this the youngster's face assumed a look of disgust. "Oh," he said in a lower tone, "I thought it was a dog fight."

His Method.

"You say you've driven your car seven years and never had an accident. How do you account for it?"

"When I'm driving I figure that every other driver is a fool, and I give him plenty of room to do the wrong thing, and mostly I've been right."

Indorsed.

Tattered Tim—"I've been trampin' four years, ma'am, an' it's all 'cause I heard the doctors recommended walkin' as the best exercise."

Mrs. Prim—"Well, the doctors are right. Walk along."

A Shrewd Doctor.

A tight-fisted old man, feeling very sick, asked a friend to recommend a physician. The friend named a certain specialist.

"Is he very expensive?" asked the sick man.

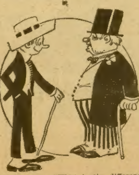
"Well, not so very. He'll charge you $4 for the first visit and $2 for each one after that."

The old fellow soon afterward walked into the office of the physician named by his friend, and upon being admitted to the consulting-room planked down $2, remarking: "Well, doctor, here I am again."

The physician calmly picked up the money and put it in a drawer, which he locked securely. The sick man looked on expectantly, awaiting the next move.

"Well, I'm ready to be examined," he said at length.

"I don't think it's necessary," replied the shrewd specialist. "There's no need to do it again. Keep right on taking the same medicine. Good day, sir."



Young Man—"What is the difference between white lies and black lies?"

Old Philosopher—"White lies are the kind we tell; black lies are the kind we hear."

Considerate.

"I've been thinking it all over and I've come to the conclusion that perhaps after all we ought to have a standing army."

"Well?"

"But I don't think it fair to keep all those men standing all the time. The least we can do is to furnish each man with a camp stool."

Her Limitations.

"Poor June! She's run down another 'workingman' with a wife and six children!"

"Well! She can't steer, eat chocolates, keep her feet on six pedals and run down rich and unattached bachelors exclusively, can she?"—Puck.

Why Business Stopped.

Floorwalker—"Do you realize that you were four hours selling those two women a yard of ribbon?"

Saleslady—"I know, sir. But just as they got to the counter they discovered that they each had a baby just learning to talk."

What He Did.

Mrs. Styles—"I see a man recently had two silver forks removed from his interior in a Stockton, Cal., hospital."

Mr. Styles—"You see, he was like other people. When a lot of extra forks are put at their places at table they're bound to do the wrong thing with them."

Family Pride.

The following story is told of the mayor of a Western city:

A small boy, who afterward proved to be a nephew of one of the mayor's stenographers, was wandering about in the city hall when one of the officials there happened upon him.

"Well, sonny," inquired the man, genially, "for whom are you looking?"

"For my Aunt Kate."

"Can't you find her?"

"I can't seem to."

"And you don't know where she is?"

"Not exactly. She's in here somewhere, tho, and I know that the mayor works in her office."

Why She Thought So.

Landlady—"That new boarder is either a married man or a widower."

Pretty Daughter—"Why, ma, he says he is a bachelor."

Landlady—"Well, I don't believe it. When he opens his pocketbook to pay his board he always turns his back to me."

Those Queer Girls.

He—"Why didn't you answer my letter?"

She—"I never received it."

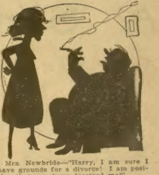
He—"You didn't?"

She—"No, and besides, I didn't like something you said in it."

Fitting and Proper.

"Now, what do you think of a man who would kiss and tell?"

"Oh, there's no harm in telling," said the fair debutante, "if he limits himself to telling the kissee how much pleasure it gave him."



Mrs. Newbride—"Harry, I am sure I have grounds for a divorce! I am positive that you have deceived me!"

Mr. Newbride—"What in the world do you mean?"

Mrs. Newbride—"I—I saw a memorandum in your pocket this morning to—to buy some new ribbons for your typewriter!"

Just So.

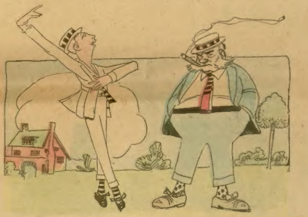
"Let your wife lead you, says a writer on various topics."

"Good advice. Better than having her drive."

A Big Man.

"Is he popular?"

"Popular! He's better than that. He's the one man all the factions in his family would unite on."



Van Dussen (at Van Rock's country seat)—"Mr. Van Rocks, I love the very ground your daughter walks on!"

Van Rocks—"Well, it's for sale if you have the price!"

His Way of Putting It.

"You and the Browns going to share a summer cottage this year?"

"No, sir. No house is big enough for two families when the other family is Brown's."

POPULAR BELIEF.

A small estate, so runs life's plan,
  Has lots and lots of charm.
You seldom see a city man
  Who thinks he couldn't farm.

A Chaser.

Father—"What do you have that little dude running after you for? I hope you don't think him the real thing?"

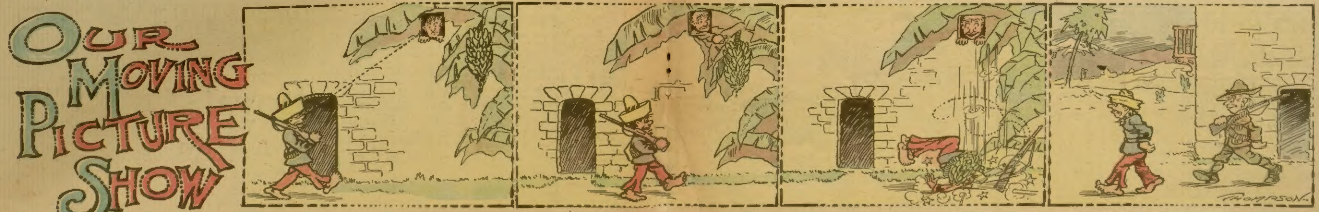
Daughter—"No, father; not the real thing, only what you'd call the chaser."

Queen of the Kitchen.

Mrs. B.—"Is your cook impertinent?"

Mrs. A.—"Well, rather. She couldn't be any worse if she was one of my own daughters."

A NEW USE FOR BANANAS



Corporal Jones is held prisoner by the Mexicans. He watches a sentry pacing up and down in front of the prison, and being a live American, he has a bright idea.

With a piece of sharp stone, chipped from the wall of his cell, he saws off a huge bunch of bananas growing in front of his window, and at just the right moment—

It falls, kersquash, upon the head of the vile Mexican sentry as he comes beneath it, knocking him loony for some time.

When the Greaser has regained his senses he finds that the ingenious Jones has made him a prisoner, and is marching him to American headquarters, where Jones is made a Lieutenant for gallant conduct.

A Sin's Shadow

Or, Meryl Starnes' Secret

By Ella Martin

Begun in No. 30, July 22. Subscriptions can begin with that issue or back copies can be obtained from news stands, our agents or by mail from office of publication.

CHAPTER IV.

MADGE'S TRIUMPH

SAFE in the bosom of her dress Madge carried a note that explained everything to her. Fate had played into her hands. She had picked up a letter which the missing girl had let fall as she fled down the marble steps of the terrace on her way to the park. It read thus:

> "If you have decided to come to me, meet me tonight at the usual place. I am going away, and I must take you with me. I cannot leave you longer where danger threatens you. Your sworn enemy is near you! Come to me and you shall know all, and the shadow of sin under which you have been bowed down shall be lifted. Come, and I will make up to you the love you have renounced."

There was no signature, but Madge knew whose hand had penned it. She knew now who it was that Norman Heath loved. The man to whom she had made threats had shown her this by removing her rival from her path before she had a chance to discover her. She laughed in secret whenever she went over in her own mind what he had done. He had parted Norman Heath and the girl he loved—the very thing she had sworn to do as part of her revenge. To defeat her object he had fulfilled her vow himself by bringing about the same results. She had no need to do anything.

And Norman—well, let him suffer. She would help to stab his heart whenever opportunity offered.

"Ah," she said, and smiled to see him writhe under her words, "how is it one can appear so innocent and be so false?"

"False to whom?" he demanded, trying to hide his love's identity from her avowed vengeance.

"Oh, don't you know? I have heard that this Meryl Starnes had a lover who trusted her and believed she was pure and true."

"And does any one dare say she is not?"

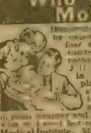
A low laugh from his tormentor put him on guard and checked his spirited defense before he had committed himself further. He must not betray his interest in Meryl to her avowed enemy. What her laugh of mockery meant it was hard to tell. She might have divined his secret, or she might be merely skeptical as to the purity and truth of the girl who had evidently eloped with another.

Sudden Death

Before an Insurance Company will take a risk on your life the examining physician will test your water and report whether you are a good risk. When your kidneys get sluggish and clog, you suffer from backache, sick-headache, dizzy spells, or twinges and pains of lumbago, rheumatism and gout, or sleep is disturbed two or three times a night—take heed, before too late!

You can readily overcome such conditions and prolong life by taking the advice of a famous physician, which is: "Keep the kidneys in good order, avoid too much meat, salt, alcohol or tea. Drink plenty of pure water and drive the uric acid out of the system by taking 'Anuric,' in tablet form." You can obtain "Anuric" at almost all drug stores. It was the discovery of Dr. Pierce of the Invalids' Hotel, Buffalo, N. Y. If you cannot obtain it at your drug store send him 10 cents for trial package "Anuric," or $1.00 for full treatment.

To Women Who Dread Motherhood



Hundreds of women have proven by experience that dread and fear are [illegible]. Pain can now be reduced [illegible] nothing by discoveries of Dr. J. H. Dye [illegible] in such cases. Book explaining fully how to bring strong, healthy children into the world with almost no pain, sent free in plain wrapper and postpaid to any woman who [illegible] her name to Dr. J. H. Dye Medical Institute, 52 Lincoln Bldg., Buffalo, N. Y. Write for it today.

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During this time of doubt and trouble Mrs. Starnes conceived an idea which caused her to make a trip to the attic. Why had her niece begun asking questions about her parents, when never in all the years before had she seemed conscious that she was not their very own child? She had always known the exact relationship, but she had never shown any curiosity before. Had she found the papers hidden so long ago in the old escritoire, and what impression had she received concerning her birth?

The lock of the desk had long been broken, and it was not surprising that Meryl had been tempted to investigate its many compartments. A glance told her that she had guessed aright. An examination of the papers showed her that only part of them had been read, and therefore the girl had learned but half the truth.

"I understand now," Mrs. Starnes murmured. "She thinks herself not good enough for Norman. The half-knowledge she has gained thru these papers had worked upon her sensitive mind until she found life at Terrace Place unbearable. Now I must take Norman Heath into my confidence."

She sent for him directly she had regained her boudoir.

"Are you still a suitor for the hand of my niece?" she asked him, going straight to the point.

"Yes," he answered frankly; "but Meryl has dismissed me as something outgrown, and therefore never to be considered again. However, I shall not rest until I have found her, or at least learned what has become of her."

"Sit down," she said, motioning him to a seat. "In any event you shall hear her story."

"No, Mrs. Starnes, I cannot listen; for Meryl herself was hiding it from me. She would not wish me to learn it from you."

"But Meryl did not know the truth—that is, the whole truth. She became possessed of part of the secret, and drew from it erroneous conclusions. She thought herself unfitted by birth to be the wife of any man, and so she gave you up. To make it easy for you she claimed to have outgrown her love. There is no harm in telling the story of her parents, as there is no reproach connected with her birth.

"As you know, Meryl is my sister's child. What is not known to any one is that her mother was deserted by her father while Meryl was a mere babe, and that she died of a broken heart. It was for another woman that Miles Kendleton deserted my sister, a woman part gypsy, who had once been queen of a Romany tribe. She knew that he was a married man, but deliberately won him from his allegiance. She was handsome and dashing, with a weird fascination about her that held him by her side. He was a villain! a coward! this Miles Kendleton. I will not spare him—his memory, rather, for he is dead!"

She rose and began pacing slowly back and forth, clasping and unclasping her hands in agitation.

"Oh, he was a greater coward and villain that I supposed a man could be!" she cried fiercely. And Norman could only sit and wait in silence till the storm had passed and she had grown calm again.

"He wanted his freedom that he might marry the other woman. But for the child's sake Mary would not consent to a divorce. Then he wrote her brutally that their marriage was not legal, that he had lured her into a mock marriage because he had thought that he might tire of her some day and want his freedom.

"It was a cruel, bitter blow! She drooped from that day, and nothing would rouse her to any interest in life. She kept a diary during those dark days, and it was that which Meryl found and read. If she had only looked further she would have discovered the certificate and other proofs of their marriage. For later her father repented—repented in dust and ashes—and sent the certificate and an affidavit from the minister who united them, to Mary, together with entreaties for her forgiveness. She sent him the pardon he craved. But she was on her deathbed, and he never saw her again.

"He later met with his just deserts, for the gypsy queen abandoned him for another. Then he learned that she was already married when she met him, and had one child, a girl, who was heir to the gypsy throne—Madge——"

She ceased speaking suddenly and looked at Norman with dilating eyes. A suspicion of the truth had entered her mind for the first time. Norman Heath sprang to his feet and faced her!

"Yes," he exclaimed, "Madge Raven! I see it all now! Madam, you are nursing a viper in your bosom!"

"I believe you are right," she answered, her mind somewhat dazed by the suddenness of the discovery they had made. "But what has that to do with Meryl's disappearance?"

"Is there no significance in the fact that Madge was beneath your roof when your niece left it?"

"But she could not have known! Surely, Meryl could not have known!" gasped Mrs. Starnes.

"But Madge knew; and there is treachery somewhere." Then he, too, started, as a thought dawned upon him. "You say Meryl's father is dead. What was he like? Can you describe him?"

"He was of medium height—dark, with a short, pointed beard, and a mustache black as a raven's wing. But that was years ago. If he were alive today he would doubtless be greatly changed."

"He is alive! I am sure of it! It is he who has enticed Meryl away!" cried Norman, convincingly, tho the thought had just come to him.

The effect upon his listener was electrical! She sprang erect, and stood with clinched hands and flashing eyes, a veritable Nemesis in appearance. She struck her hands together, and a muttered imprecation passed her lips.

"Prove it!" she cried. "Prove it to me, and my vengeance shall yet overtake him! I am not so generous as my sister was! I have not forgiven him!"

"I have also a story to tell," Norman said. "It is a sort of confession. You know Meryl and I were not engaged when I left here, tho I had asked her to be my wife. I went away piqued, for I believed she was trifling with me. Then, while abroad, I met Madge Raven and paid court to her charms. If Meryl would not encourage me, there were others who would, I thought resentfully. When I returned to America she followed me, for what purpose I know not, but I foolishly lingered by her side.

"Then, one day, weeks afterward, a stranger sought an interview with me, and before he took his leave he had revealed to me the history of Madge Raven's past. She was an adventuress, he told me, a married woman, and the daughter of a gypsy queen. Some time later he told me his own story, and it tallies with what you have said of Miles Kendleton. And the woman who came between him and his wife was Madge Raven's mother.

"I asked him why he had taken so much trouble to save me from the toils of an adventuress, and he replied that it was for the sake of the girl who loved me. 'Go back to Meryl Starnes,' he added, 'before you have gone too far.' I then asked him who he was, but he refused to reveal his identity, saying merely that he was one who had the good of Miss Starnes at heart—one who would see her happy at any cost. Now, who could have had an interest in Meryl's affairs except her father?"

"This man's appearance—was it at all like what I have described?"

"Somewhat, except that he is smooth-shaven now. I believe Madge could throw some light upon the matter if she chose."

"It is not likely she would do it, tho. Wait, I have a plan!" Then, after a moment's thought: "Does Madge know you are cognizant of her marriage?"

"No, I never told her why I ceased my attentions so suddenly, for I had promised my informant not to betray him. But I am sure she mistrusted, for since then I have overheard her accuse this man to his face of revealing her past to me."

"Then she will know where to find this stranger, who, I am convinced, is Miles Kendleton, and Meryl's father. And when we find him we will have discovered my niece's whereabouts. It is all plain to me now: Miles has worked upon the sensibilities of the child, and won her to him because he is her father. She thought it her duty to go with him; and she also wished to hide herself and what she believed to be her humiliation."

"You spoke of having a plan," he reminded her.

"Listen, I will unfold it to you. If it works we shall be in a position to force Miss Raven to reveal the whereabouts of her stepfather, Miles Kendleton."

For a long time they consulted together, then calling Mr. Starnes into the room, they took him into their confidence. But to all others their plan was to be kept secret.

CHAPTER V.

THE RUSE.

MADGE," said Norman, on the day following his interview with Mrs. Starnes, "I am able at last to tell you what parted us. There was another to whom I was in honor bound. Now that other has set me free. Will you marry me—at once, before anything can come between us?"

Madge Raven caught her breath sharply. Then he had not been told all the truth, after all? He knew nothing of her husband in far-off Italy. She was also right in thinking it was Meryl who had stood between them. It must be, she thought, that he had loved her all the time, and was glad to find himself freed by circumstances. Her stepfather, in trying to outwit her, had brought about the very state of affairs she desired most. But she did not yield to his pleading without proper hesitation.

But finally the consent he sued for was won. And Madge herself stipulated that the ceremony should take place secretly in the little country church a mile from Terrace Place.

"But why this secrecy, Madge? Most girls desire a fashionable wedding."

"There are no guests left at the Starnes mansion. Because of what has happened they have considerately withdrawn. If the wedding is to take place at once there is no time for display. It would be in better taste to have the ceremony unknown to our host and hostess, and depart at once. They would prefer to be left to themselves, I think."

"It shall be as you say," he answered. "I will make arrangements at once and we will be married this afternoon. Meet me at the church at 3 o'clock; I will be there with the witnesses. I must hurry away now, as I have much to do before then."

"So," mused the prospective bride, gaz-

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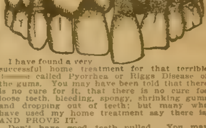

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ing after his retreating form with wondering eyes. "You are not so much in love, Mr. Heath, as you might be. You are up to something. But don't be too confident of yourself—Madge Raven wasn't born yesterday! I will watch your little game and see what lies behind it.

"There was a time when you would have shown your appreciation of my acceptance in a more demonstrative manner. You would have kissed me on the slightest pretext. That was before my charming step-papa took you aside and told tales out of school. If I see clearly, there is some plot afoot to get me into your power for a purpose. I have not the key to the mystery, but I could swear that Norman Heath knows that I am not free to wed him. He would get me into his toils and then—ah, we shall see! 'He laughs best who laughs last!'"

Needless to say that the pulpit of the little country church was occupied by one not vested with the authority to unite the destinies of two people who chose to join their hands and hearts. Norman was determined to take no risks. The husband of the gypsy daughter might not be still living, and he had no notion of finding himself bound to this woman. If Madge believed that this was an ordained minister it would serve their purpose quite as well. To the best of her belief she would turn away from the altar a bigamist, supposing that the fact would never come to light; and then to save herself from exposure she could be frightened into telling where Miles Kendleton, and therefore Meryl Starnes, could be found.

But they had reckoned without Madge Raven!

Promptly at the appointed hour the bride-to-be was at the door of the church in the grove. Norman met her there and escorted her at once up the aisle to the altar where the pseudo-minister awaited them. A veiled woman and a man in disguise, the witnesses Norman had provided, sat in an obscure corner. They were the foster-parents of Meryl Starnes, who had thought to pit cunning against cunning in an effort to discover the whereabouts of their adopted daughter. There was a moment's deep silence, then the marriage service began.

There was a smile about Madge Raven's lips, which lingered there till the all-important question was asked; and then in lieu of the softly spoken "I will," came the words, in Madge's ringing voice, "I will not!"

The pretended pastor nearly let the book fall, so great was his surprise. The incident was without a precedent. The two spectators rose from their seats in amazement, but quickly sank back again and waited.

"Madge!" gasped Norman Heath, with wonder and consternation mingling in his tones, "what means this capriciousness? Why do you reject me at the last moment?"

"Because," answered Madge, slowly and with triumph, "I have a husband already, and I cannot be the wife of two men at one and the same time."

"But you knew all this before," he said angrily. "Why did you go to such lengths as this?"

"Call it a woman's caprice, if you like. Or perhaps it was simply a lark. Life at Terrace Place is rather tame since the other guests have departed. I shall go home tomorrow."

"You will go today!" exclaimed Mrs. Starnes, rising to her feet and throwing aside her veil.

Madge shrugged her shoulders.

"That will suit me better," she replied. Then turning swiftly she faced Norman Heath. "And now I demand to know what all this mummery is for! Why this mock marriage? And what is to be gained by it?"

Norman in turn shrugged his shoulders. It would be no use to confess all and then try to wheedle the truth out of her. He knew she would laugh in his face.

"Perhaps I also find life a little dull at Terrace Place, and longed for a little lark to break the monotony," he replied.

"Don't try to deceive me!" she cried wrathfully. "You knew as well as I that I am not free. Miles Kendleton took the pains to tell you my past. I went as far in this fake business as I have for your confusion. I have foiled your game, whatever it was. You intended to get me into your power, for what purpose I demand to know!"

Before an answer could be given the sound of hurried footsteps outside caused all eyes to turn in the direction of the entrance.

"Hold!" cried a voice from the doorway. "I forbid the marriage!"

"It isn't at all necessary, my dearest papa!" said Madge, sweetly, as she slipped past Mr. Kendleton, who stood on the threshold, and sped up the road toward the house.

Then the newly arrived, unbidden guest at the wedding he intended to prevent found himself facing his wronged wife's sister. There was an instant of [illegible] silence. But instead of the reproaches he expected to be heaped upon him she only demanded, as she grasped him by the arm:

"Where is Meryl? What have you done with her? Speak!"

"She is at Terrace Place," he answered her. "She demanded to be brought back as soon as she learned the whole truth concerning her birth, and knew that it was legitimate."

"Why did you entice her away?" she persisted, tightening her hold on his arm.

"To remove her from the presence of one who has sworn to ruin her life's happiness," he answered with dignity, "the woman who has just left here."

"Yes!" Mrs. Starnes gasped understandingly.

"I learned from one of the servants at the house what was going on here, and came to prevent the ceremony without letting Meryl know anything about it."

Then mutual explanations followed, and together they all returned to Terrace Place.

Madge Raven had reached the house before them, and finding Meryl alone in the library, said to her:

"Congratulate me, Miss Starnes! I was married not a half hour ago to Norman Heath, your one-time lover!"

She did not wait to see the effect of her words on the girl who loved Norman Heath as the adventuress never could now, but went at once to her own rooms. When the others arrived the carriage containing her had just passed thru the gates.

Norman found Meryl upon a couch sobbing bitterly. He at once gathered her in his arms and made her listen to the whole story.

"Our troubles are all over," he added cheerfully; "and you and I will be married as soon as you will have me. Not in the church secretly, but here at Terrace Place, with all the magnificence a bride's heart delights in."

She looked up with eyes that shone despite her tears.

"Oh, it will be Aunt Josephine who will delight in all that!" she cried. "All that I shall care for is that I will have you, and that everybody will forgive my father as I have done!"

And for Meryl's sake, and because he had watched over her, Mrs. Starnes decided to forgive her brother-in-law. At least she agreed to let bygones be bygones.

The End.

* * *

Old-Timers Could Hike.

Some of the hiking that has been accomplished in Mexico recently, by various units of the "punitive expedition"—notably the feat of the detail from the 11th Cavalry under Maj. Robert Howse—may be compared with earlier records. Howse and his "smoked Yankees" covered 671 miles in twenty-one days, living off the country, as they took but five days' rations with them. Much of the way was over extremely rough mountain trails, says Outing.

In March, 1848, First Lieut. John Love, commanding Company B, 1st dragoons, who were acting light artillery, was 150 miles from headquarters when ordered to push forward with his battery. The distance was made in four nights and three days and a half. They arrived before Chihuahua at daybreak, after marching all night, were in position on the firing line at 9:30 a. m., fought all day, and got no chance to rest until nine that night.

In October, 1862, Stuart's brigade rode seventy-five miles in one day when nearly cornered by Pleasanton. On June 30, 1863, the 6th Corps of the Army of the Potomac marched thirty-six miles, a long hike for the infantry and particularly good time for such a large body.

Howse made fifty-five miles a day for part of the time. Considering the contrast between Mexico and our Middle States, the dash south from the border shows that their marching qualities have not deteriorated since the Civil War.

* * *

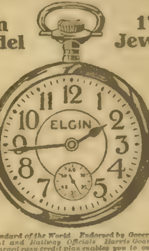
Matches Were Rare.

Less than a century ago the "instantaneous light box" containing seven dozen Congrove matches, which were ignited by drawing them between folds of sandpaper, sold for a shilling a box in England, according to an exchange. They did not have a wide sale because they failed to light half the time, and when they did ignite the stench of the chemicals was such that the airing of the room was necessary. Lucifer matches were not sold generally until near the middle of the last century. At that time each match was a stick whittled by hand, and the cost of manufacture was such that only the well-to-do availed themselves of the convenience. As a result of the invention of a machine for making matches any one of several American factories can make twice as many matches in a day as could be made in a year in England in the forties. The invention of automatic boxmakers served also to reduce the price of matches to a point at which they could be used generally.

The supplantation of hand labor by machinery popularized matches. There will be a continuing increase in the cost of the materials of which match heads are made as long as the war continues, but the slight increase in the cost of the product will not be sufficient to deter even the very poor outside of China from using matches with accustomed freedom.

* * *

The young man who leaves two-thirds of a cigar on a dark corner of the doorstep when he calls on his best girl will make her a frugal husband.



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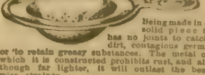

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The Chase.

"A man's wife is a terrible nuisance," complained Wizzert to his client. "I couldn't get a bit of work done yesterday because my wife kept telephoning me about a sick cat. I told her I had no time to bother with a sick cat, but she insisted that it was howling terribly and she couldn't stand it.

"So I said: 'Phone the pound master and tell him to come and take it away.' She called me again in a little while and informed me that the pound master wouldn't take the cat unless it was boxed up. I told her to box it then. She said boxing sick cats wasn't in her line, but she would try it. Later she communicated the intelligence that her efforts to box the cat had failed, but that it was bottled up under her neighbor's doorsteps.

"My wife had chased that cat into Mrs. Dreadnaught's garden, where it had laid itself down on the hyacinth bed. Mrs. Dreadnaught had turned the hose on it, and it had fled under her doorsteps. I told my wife to ask the pound man if he would accept bottled cats, and if so to have him come and get it.

"When I got home that afternoon I saw signs of a big commotion. The pound man's wagon was drawn up the street in front of our house and I caught a glimpse of my wife making gestures and a brigand kneeling in a fern bed at her feet by Mrs. Dreadnaught's kitchen steps. I saw Mrs. Dreadnaught yanking another brigand off her dahlia bed.

"The brigand peered under the steps. 'I don't see any cat,' he said.

"'Take another look,' said Mrs. Dreadnaught.

"'Well,' answered the brigand, 'he has dug a hole under the steps.'

"'Pull him out,' said Mrs. Dreadnaught.

"'I'm afraid he'll scratch me.'

"'Two big, husky men afraid of a sick cat!' jeered Mrs. Dreadnaught.

"The brigand assumed a coaxing tone. 'Kitty, kitty, kitty!' But kitty didn't fall for any of that soft stuff. By that time all the rest of the neighbors for three blocks around were on hand, and the big scene was on.

"The brigand, kneeling at my wife's feet, implored her for a hoe. A hoe was produced with alacrity.

"Then the other brigand asked for a sack.

"'I suppose,' said Mrs. Dreadnaught, 'now that you have borrowed these, you can go ahead with the trick.'

"They did, the cat was hoed into the sack as if by magic, and away went bag, cat and brigand.

"As Mrs. Dreadnaught looked over the wreck of her garden she announced that the next time she had a sick cat for the pound master she would express it to him."

* * *

His Suit.

Aaron Smythe was selecting a summer suit. As our story opens he had been selecting it for thirty-three minutes.

"Now, I'll just try on the blue one again," he said to the bald but patient salesman. "It's between the blue one and the brown one—I mean the gray one."

"You mean the checked one, don't you?" questioned the weary salesman.

"Do I? Yes, the checked one," said Aaron Smythe dazedly. "Now I'll try on the brown one—I mean the checked one. I've tried on so many, I really——"

"Here it is," said the salesman. And he helped him off with the blue one and on with the checked one. And so it went for seventeen more minutes.

"Muriella," said Aaron Smythe to his wife that night, "you'll love the handsome purple suit I bought at Schrunchfield's today. No, it was a light red one—or was it mauve? No, it was purple. Only $45, and that includes letting out the shoulders, talking in the back, shortening the sleeves, lengthening the buttonholes and widening the knees."

Just then the bell rang. It was Schrunchfield's wagon delivering the suit.

It was a green one.

* * *

The New Style.

"This convict complains that he was railroaded to State prison."

"I suppose he thought they ought to take him there in an automobile."

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WANTED—HUSTLERS TO TAKE ORDERS for made-to-measure high-grade men's tailored suits from $9.00 to $26.00. Make $25.00 to $50.00 weekly. Elegant large book outfit free. Experience unnecessary. No pocket folder affair. Splendid opportunity to make money. Handy Dandy Line, Dept. B, 411 S. Sangamon St., Chicago.

AGENTS WANTED

WE WANT YOU TO MAKE $5,000.00 A year or more. We need a good live agent right now in your territory to handle our talking machine and records. No experience, no capital necessary. Be first, write quick for particulars and territory. Metropoliphone Talking Machine Co., 111 Second Ave., Dept. 35, New York.

YOUR MONOGRAM DESIGNED FOR ANY purpose. Any size up to 3 inches. 25c, or send 25c for sample plate showing 37 different styles and prices. Agents wanted. National Engravers, 38 West 33, New York.

LARGE MANUFACTURER WANTS REPREsentatives to sell shirts, underwear, hosiery, dresses, waists, skirts, direct to homes. Write for free samples. Madison Mills, 586 Broadway, New York City.

MINTON'S IRON, RUST, MILDUE AND INK remover, vanishes stains like magic. Retail 25c, profit 18c [illegible] brings working outfit. Minton Chemical Co., 702 Dallas Avenue, Pittsburgh, Pa.

BIG PAY—AGENTS NOT EARNING $100 monthly should write the largest manufacturers of transparent handled knives and razors in the world. We will show you how. Novelty Cutlery Co., 123 Bar St., Canton, O.

SALES AGENTS TO CO-OPERATE WITH our sales department and build up million dollar enterprise with article in big demand. Get exclusive territory rights today. Philham Mfg. Co., 804 S. 6th St., St. Louis, Mo.

DRIVING AGENTS WANTED IN EVERY county for Birch Motor Cars. Write quick for full information. Birch Motor Cars, 1611 Tower Bldg., Chicago.

AGENTS—I'VE A NEW SOAP GAME that's a dandy. New stuff: 100% profits. Sample and full layout free. Write quick. L[illegible]lan Co., Dept. 21, St. Louis, Mo.

HELP WANTED

MEN, WOMEN, WANTED EVERYWHERE. U. S. Government jobs. $75.00 to $150.00 month. Vacations. Common education sufficient. Write immediately for free list of positions now obtainable. Franklin Institute, Dep't. M 30, Rochester, N. Y.

EVERY READER OF THE LEDGER OUGHT to read these ads. Every week splendid chances to make money—to better yourself—to buy, sell or exchange goods or services, are offered [illegible]

LADY OR GENTLEMAN TO TRAVEL FOR old-established firm. No canvassing. Staple line. $18. weekly, pursuant to contract. Expenses advanced. G. K. Nichols, Philadelphia, Pa. Pepper Bldg.

BECOME CHAUFFEURS. $18 WEEK. Learn while earning. Samp[illegible] Franklin Institute, Dep't. M 810, Rochester, N. Y.

$25 WEEKLY COLLECTING NAMES AND addresses. Send stamp. Superba Co., W[illegible], Baltimore, Md.

HELP WANTED—Male and Female

EARN $15 WEEKLY ADDRESSING ENVElopes at home, either sex; full instructions 10 cents silver [illegible] Iowa

MALE HELP WANTED

FREE NATIONAL LEAGUE $1.25 BASE- [illegible]

NO STRIKE: HONEST, SOBER MEN EVerywhere for [illegible]

A POSITION IS OPEN FOR YOU IN THE [illegible] service [illegible] you qualify. My money [illegible] it. Write quick [illegible] Earl Hopkins, W[illegible]

GOVERNMENT RAILWAY MAIL, POST OF- [illegible] "exams" everywhere soon [illegible] former Government civil [illegible] Booklet free. Arthu[illegible] Rochester, N. Y.

I WILL START YOU EARNING $4 DAILY at home, silvering mirrors; free instructive booklet. G. F. Redmond, Dept. 400, Boston, Mass.

MALE HELP—CONTINUED

WANTED—RAILWAY MAIL CLERKS; $75.00 month. Sample examination questions free. Franklin Institute, Dept. M 170, Rochester, N. Y.

GOVERNMENT EXAMINATIONS—THORough instruction, $5. Returned if not appointed. Particulars free. American Civil Service School, Washington, D. C.

BE A DETECTIVE. EARN FROM $150.00 to $300.00 per month; travel over the world. Write C. T. Ludwig, 820 Westover Bldg., Kansas City, Mo.

GOVERNMENT FARMERS NEEDED. BIG salaries. Permanent job. Light work. Write, Ozment, 68F, St. Louis, Mo.

FEMALE HELP WANTED

GOODINGS SHIRT WAIST AND SKIRT SUPporters sell on sight. Ladies easily make $1.50 to $3.00 a day. Write for particulars. D. S. Wylie Company, 124 East 23rd Street, New York City.

LADIES—MAKE SHIELDS AT HOME, $10 per 100; no canvassing required. Send stamped addressed envelope for particulars. Eureka Co., Dept. 17, Kalamazoo, Mich.

LADIES WANTED TO INTRODUCE OUR laundry bleaching compound. Good commission to workers. Madame Rhodes Mfg. Co., 18 W. 37th St., Chicago, Ill.

FIVE BRIGHT, CAPABLE LADIES TO travel, demonstrate and sell dealers. $25 to $50 per week. Railroad fare paid. Goodrich Drug Company, Dept. 85, Omaha, Neb.

WOMEN TO SEW; MATERIAL PREPAID to your house. Plain sewing. No canvassing. Send stamped envelope for prices [illegible] Dept. [illegible] Phila., Pa.

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

BE YOUR OWN BOSS. MAKE $25.00 TO $50.00 a week with a Daydark Post Card Machine. Work at fairs, picnics, home, everywhere. No experience needed. Make money the day outfit arrives. Small investment 500% profits. Write free trial offer and big catalog. Daydark Specialty Co., Desk 43, St. Louis, Mo.

OIL. $10 INVESTED WITH US HAS MADE others $300 in less than six months. Let [illegible] you our magazine, "Profitable Invest[illegible]" six months free, which tells how to [illegible] your money make you independent. [illegible] Hoffman Company, 407 Fannin Street, [illegible] Texas.

TEXAS OIL TRIANGLE MAKING MIL- [illegible] small investors. $1 to $5 month[illegible] big profits under our co-opera[illegible] plan. No stock; you own land. [illegible] Particulars free. Triangle Oil [illegible] Bldg., Houston, Texas.

FARMS WANTED

FARMS WANTED—HAVE 4,000 BUYERS; [illegible] your unsold property. 504 Farm[illegible]

FARM LANDS FOR SALE

YOU CAN DO BETTER ON A SOUTHERN [illegible] for a year's subscription free [illegible] our beautifully illustrated magazine, The [illegible] Homeseeker, which tells all about [illegible] priced land and southern oppor[illegible] Write F. H. LaBaume, Agrl. Agt. [illegible] Ry. 248 Arcade Bldg. Roanoke, Va.

FARMS FOR SALE

POOR MAN'S CHANCE—$5.00 MONTHLY buys 40 acres good land, near town [illegible] Box 425 S. Carthage, Mo.

FOR SALE

55 VALUABLE FORMULAS, TRICKS, IL- [illegible] and household hints in our inter[illegible] issues. Sent complete for 10c. Harold Troy, Groton, S. D.

MOVING PICTURE BUSINESS

$35.00 PROFIT NIGHTLY. SMALL CAPITAL starts you. No experience needed. Our machines are used and endorsed by Government institutions. Catalog Free. Atlas Moving Picture Co., Franklin Bldg., Chicago.

MOVING PICTURE BUSINESS

MAKE MONEY QUICK—IN MOVING PICture business. We start you and furnish guaranteed outfit on easy payment plan. No experience needed. Catalog free. Monarch Film Service, 228 Union Ave., Dept. C, Memphis, Tenn.

SHORT STORIES WANTED

WRITERS!—STORIES, POEMS, PLAYS, etc., are wanted for publication. Literary Bureau, B4, Hannibal, Mo.

ROOTS, HERBS, ETC.

$10 A DAY GATHERING EVERGREENS, roots and herbs, 10c brings book and war prices. Particulars free. Botanical O, New Haven, Conn.

NAMES

WE PAY 25c EACH FOR NAMES AND ADdresses. Send dime for contract. Directory [illegible] Grand Rapids, Mich.

UNDERGROUND TREASURES

UNDERGROUND TREASURES—HOW AND where to find them; particulars 2c. Wilson's World, Chicago, Ill.

HONEY

BEST QUALITY NEW CLOVER HONEY, 30 lb. can $3.45; two or more cans $3.30 each. Satisfaction guaranteed or money refunded. Sample 10 cts. Price list free. M. V. Facey, Preston, Minn.

PATENTS

PATENTS SECURED OR FEE RETURNED. Actual search and [illegible] report free. Send sketches and desc[illegible] of your invention. My pat[illegible] gets full value. 1916 Edition [illegible] patent book free. George P. K[illegible], Barrister Building, Washington, D. C.

WANTED, AN IDEA! WHO CAN THINK of some simple thing to patent? Protect your ideas [illegible] bring you wealth. Write [illegible] "Patent Buyers," [illegible] Patent and Your Money." [illegible] & Co., Patent Attorneys, [illegible] Washington, D. C.

PATENTS ADVERTISED FREE IN POPU- [illegible] Washington.

"PATENTS AND PATENT POSSIBILITIES" [illegible] page treatise [illegible] manufacturers con[illegible]

PERSONAL

LADIES STOP WORRYING, "SAFETY First." Send $1.00 for box safe, sure, [illegible] Mailed plain wrapper [illegible] Grand Rapids [illegible]

MEN ON THE DOWN GRADE, WITH Lame Back, Despondency, Failing Memory, Loss of Ambition, unfitting you for work or business. Remember we are specialists in all diseases of men. Book symptom blank and [illegible] sealed. Hinze Medical Institute, [illegible]on Ave., So., Minneapolis, Minn.

PERSONAL—(Continued)

CUT THIS OUT QUICK, IF UNMARRIED, and mail it to us within next ten days, with your name and address and we will give you an opportunity to secure two years' membership in the old reliable Sincere Corresponding Club, free of charge, without spending a dollar of your money, which will entitle you to thousands of names and addresses with descriptions of wealthy, refined, handsome, home loving, lady members of our Club, who desire early marriage. Write quick, enclosing some postage for large collection of photos and descriptions of ladies of means desiring marriage. Address Sincere Club, B520, Valley, Nebr.

LADIES—WHEN DELAYED OR IRREGUlar, use Triumph Pills, always dependable. "Relief" and particulars free. Not sold at drug stores. Write National Medical Institute, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

USE OXOCIDE, DRUGLESS TREATMENT, guaranteed for all forms of blood and skin disorders, old sores, ulcers and blood poisoning in general. Write for advice free. W. Albertine, Box 1685, Denver, Colo.

MARRY RICH—BIG LIST OF DESCRIPtions and photos of congenial people with means FREE. Sealed. Either sex. Standard Cor. Club, Grayslake, Illinois.

MARRY—FREE PHOTOS, BEAUTIFUL ladies; descriptions and directory, pay when married. New Plan Co., Dept. 21, Kansas City, Mo.

MARRY—MARRIAGE DIRECTORY WITH photos and description free. Pay when married. The Exchange, Dept. 28, Kansas City, Mo.

MEN, IF NERVOUS, WEAK, RUN DOWN, write today for a trial package of Herculin, the wonderful upbuilding tonic. M. Oswald Co., 318 West 42d St., New York.

SEXOID—A MARVELOUS CURE FOR weakness in men; restores lost powers; price $1. Money refunded if it fails. Dr. C. [illegible], Seattle, Wash.

LOVINE SACHET NEVER FAILS. REAL thing guaranteed. $1.75 outfit, both sexes, sachet and secrets 25 cts. Union Co., Palatine, Ill.

HAVE SWEETHEARTS EVERYWHERE. Members' descriptions published free. Membership 10c. Star Card Exchange, Amarillo, Texas.

MARRY, HUNDREDS RICH, WISH MARriage soon; confidential; years' experience, descriptions free. "The Successful Club," Box [illegible], Oakland, Calif.

FASCINATING. REAL PHOTOGRAPHS. Female loveliness. Can't describe her. Samples 10c. B. Weber, Jasonville, Indiana.

LOVERS' PERFUME POWDER, SECRET and full directions, two dimes. Scientific Extract Co., Akron, Ohio.

"I'M READY." FASCINATING PICTURE, [illegible] kind men like. Sealed (10c silver). [illegible] Yates Center, Kansas.

QUIT TOBACCO OR DRINK—GIVE AGE, [illegible] used. Send 4c postage for remedy. Pay $1 if cured. Ideal Co., D7, Lakemills, Wis.

LADIES—TAKE COTTON ROOT TABLETS monthly regulator. $1.00. Radium Mfg. [illegible] K, St. Louis, Mo.

MARRY RICH, HUNDREDS ANXIOUS TO [illegible] Descriptions and photos free. [illegible] Grand Rapids, Mich.

MARRY RICH—BE PROSPEROUS AND happy. Write New Home Club, Los Angeles, Cal.

"MARRY—10,000 WORTH $100 TO $100,000; [illegible] sealed 10c. B. W. Love, Box 1616, [illegible]

FUTURE FORETOLD—SEND DIME, BIRTHdate, stamped envelope, three questions. Mrs. [illegible], 2018 Howard, Omaha, Neb.

WEALTHY WIDOW, 27, ANXIOUS TO [illegible] International, Box 959, Los Angeles, Cal.

MARRIAGE PAPER FREE; BEST PUB- [illegible] for sure results, reliable. Eastern [illegible]

WIDOW, 31, WORTH $50,000, WOULD [illegible] M., Box [illegible], Messenger, Los [illegible]

FORTY-EIGHT HIGH-KICKING GIRLS, Sensational Dancing, etc., 10c. R. Glass, 214-G, Latrobe, Pa.

GET MARRIED — BEST MATRIMONIAL paper published. Mailed Free. The Correspondent, Toledo, Ohio.

FUTURE AND PAST TOLD. SEND 10c and birth date. James Smith, 326 Madison St., Chicago.

FUTURE TOLD—10c BIRTHDATE. FLORence Edwards, Hearst Bldg., Chicago.

Chicago Ledger

Entered as second-class matter June 1 , 1885, at the postoffice at Chicago, Illinois, under act of March 3, 1879.

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1,250,000

COPIES WEEKLY.

GENTLE JABS.

The good die either young or poor.

The average wife earns more than she gets.

The darkest hour is when you haven't a match.

Some men even like to brag of how much they owe.

The more checks a spendthrift has the faster he travels.

After a man gets married he is no longer self-possessed.

People who do not believe all they hear are fond of repeating it.

A man buys clothes to put on—a woman buys them to show off.

Be sure you are right—but don't be too sure everybody else is wrong.

An office holder should remember that one bad term doesn't deserve another.

Do all the work you can; there are lots of lazy men who will do the rest.

Don't wait for your ship to come in, charter a tug and go out aud meet it.

There are two sides to every story—and some have four sides and a ceiling.

When the meek inherit the earth we hope that they won't make the rest of us get off.

If a man has enough money to carry him thru he can get along without brains.

A busy man is one who can't find time to meddle with things that don't concern him.

Sympathy may be all right in its place, but it can never take the place of ready money

The average girl never turns up her nose at a man who knows enough to turn down the gas.

A woman can get more pleasure out of a good cry than a man can extract from a good laugh.

Statistics show that the sooner a man allows his wife to have the last word the sooner the controversy will end

It's a woman's natural faith that enables her to believe only the things she wants to when she knows she doesn't.

One of the easiest ways for a man to get married is to tell a young widow that he intends to remain a bachelor

If at the age of 2 years a child doesn't know whether it pays to cry or not, it will never know enough to startle the world.

Many a girl has given up an easy job at a good salary for the sake of working all the rest of her life for her board and clothes

Home and Health

FASHION NOTES.

There are many gracefully floppy hats worn this summer

The most interesting feature of a wash skirt is usually its pocket.

Lavender suede for a belt on a frock of navy serge is a decidedly daring feat.

Smart separate collars with or without matching cuffs are especially appropriate for wear with the newest tailor-mades

The square veil made of spotted net and bordered with fine lace is enjoying a triumphant reign. The Parisiennes wear these veils coquettishly; they use them in much the same way that a Spanish beauty uses her fan—a deadly weapon which displays what it pretends to conceal!

To go with the suits of jersey and one-piece frocks of the same material, that will be sought for wear at mountain and shore, are to be had hats formed of this material embroidered with curious birds, flowers, etc., in colored wool. Talking of wool embroidery, a most unusual hat of woven willow in natural color, shown by an exclusive shop, had a sprouting Bulgarian design over crown, and this design was carried out in all the dull rich colors.

Sport waists in washable materials, such as crepe de chine, wash satin, linen, batiste and voile, and also silk jersey, are much in demand, says the Dry Goods Economist. The smartest sport waists for adults have frills of extreme width, falling in cascades. Other sport waists follow the Norfolk lines, having broad plaits at the back and front and being finished to wear outside the skirt. White is now prominent in sport and utility wear, and plain with high-colored striped material combinations of high colors with white are included in practically every shipment. Little change has developed in the demand for the more dressy waists. The orders continue to call for hand-embroidered effects with touches of lace in models or sheer silk crepe, crepe de chine and chiffon. Batiste is coming very strongly to the front, but voile is holding the leading position in cottons.

❧

FOR THE HOUSEWIFE.

If you would clean your grass rugs before laying them try sponging with a weak salt and water solution. Bran water also is excellent.

Ether is a good thing for removing grease stains from clothing.

A teaspoonful of vinegar put into home made candy will prevent it from being sticky.

It is a good idea to have a good-sized kitchen salt shaker filled with a mixture of salt and pepper. This saves time in seasoning.

Cardboard boxes cut into convenient sizes will provide you with excellent scrapers with which to clean trash out of the kitchen sink.

❧

RECIPES.

CHERRY PUDDING—Take two eggs one cup of milk, two and one-half cups of flour, three quarters of a cup of sugar, one tablespoonful of butter, half a teaspoonful of salt, one teaspoonful of baking powder, and one pound of cherries, stoned. Separate the eggs, beat the yolks until light, adding the butter, salt, flour and baking powder; beat well, then fold in the well-beaten whites. Mix this, then put a layer of it in a well-buttered dish or mold, then a layer of cherries, then a layer of batter, and so on until all is used, having batter on the top. Sprinkle with granulated sugar and bake thirty minutes in a hot oven. Serve with the following sauce: Take a pint of milk, two tablespoonfuls each of butter and flour, half a cup of sugar, flavor with vanilla or mace, and two tablespoonfuls of butter. To serve lift the pudding into the dishes, pour over it the sauce and place a tablespoonful of hard sauce on top. Half a cup of sugar worked in cream with three tablespoonfuls of the butter, work until good and creamy, add four tablespoonfuls of finely minced cherries.

POTATO BISCUITS—Weigh out the same amount of potatoes and flour and half the amount of butter with a little salt. The potatoes should be boiled and mashed. Mix and knead until smooth Let stand fifteen to twenty minutes, and then roll out about one and a quarter inches thick: cut with a round biscuit cutter and fry in lard until brown

SALLY LUNN—Sift a pint of flour, two teaspoonfuls of baking powder and half a teaspoonful of salt, and add half a cupful of milk, half a cupful of melted butter and two beaten egg yolks. Mix thoroly. Then add two egg whites beaten stiff. Drop the batter in muffin tins and bake. It is a stiff batter and when the egg whites are folded in they do not mix completely with the other ingredients, and so the tops of the muffins are somewhat irregular.

HEALTH NOTES.

If the eyeballs feel sore and tired from overwork or strain of any kind apply a cloth saturated in hot water over the closed eyelids. This will also remove the effects of weeping

To make cough sirup take a tablespoonful of molasses and stir it thick with ground ginger. Make only a small amount at a time, and it will always be fresh. Take a teaspoonful, or as much as is needed

If the hands are not good and the nails badly shaped try to improve the latter by training the cuticle. Every night soak the finger in hot water for five minutes. Then with an orangewood stick press back the cuticle to lengthen the nails. Afterward rub in cold cream Do not omit this or the soaking will make the cuticle very dry.

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NEEDLEWORK.

Among the novelties in lingerie shown this season are three-piece sets, consisting of drawers, chemise and nightgown, all made of flowered silk (printed not embroidered). The background of white is almost completely covered with wreaths of tiny flowers, in the most delicate colors. White ribbon is used for shoulder straps on the chemise and in the insertion used on the drawers and nightgown.

A variation of the patchwork quilt is one made from alternating squares of pink-and-white or blue-and-white or lavender-and-white sateen, one set of squares being worked in simple embroidery stitch with a wreath or other design. Such quilts as these make attractive needlework for the porch, especially those that are made in squares, as these take little space and are not trying to the eyes or nerves.

Chintzes and French cretonnes come in charming colors and in odd conventional designs. When squares or runners of these materials are bound in heavy gold galloon, no smarter effect could be asked for. Strips and squares of heavy crash bound with linen of a plain color or with a linen border buttonholed on are practical and good-looking for camp or bungalow verandas.

Only $1.00 After Trial

Yes, you may keep this new Edison—and your choice of records too, for only a single dollar. Pay the balance at rate of only a few cents a day.

Free Trial Try the new Edison in your own home before you decide to buy. Have all the newest entertainments. Entertain your friends. [illegible]

Write Today For Our New Edison Book [illegible]

F. K. BABSON, Edison Phonograph Distributors
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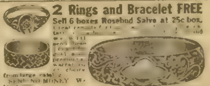
LADIES, PRESERVE YOUR YOUTHFUL APPEARANCE.

Madame Mignette's Beauty Cream and Skin Food removes every defect, spot, freckle, pimple, blemish or wrinkle, leaving the skin soft, clear and smooth. It is perfectly harmless and will not injure the most delicate skin. It preserves and brings back the youthful glow to the face and ruddiness to the cheeks, preserving it in this condition until extreme old age. This preparation has been used for years, and hundreds are now using it and are more than delighted with the results. Send us ten (10) cents for formula which you can have filled at any drug store at a very small cost. Do not delay, but write at once. Box 491, Blairsville, Pa.



2 Rings and Bracelet FREE

Sell 6 boxes Rosebud Salve at 25c box. [illegible] SEND NO MONEY. We trust you.

Rosebud Perfume Co., Box 305. Woodsboro, Md.

LADIES, $1000! I positively guarantee my great Successful "Compound." Safely relieves some of the longest, most obstinate abnormal affections in 3 to 5 days. No harm, pain or interference with work. Mail $1.50, Double Strength, $2.00. BOOKLET FREE. Write today Dr. C. L. Southington Remedy Co., 515 Main St., Kansas City, Mo.

MENDING TISSUE THE WONDER OF THE AGE. No sewing or darning. Repairs clothing, silk, satin, cotton goods, ribbons, fabrics of all kinds, kid gloves, [illegible] umbrellas, parasols, stockings, etc. Package, postpaid, 10 cents, three packages, 25 cents. Address PENN PUBLISHING CO., Parnassus, Pa.

LEG SORES

Healed by ANTI-FLAMMA Poultice Plaster. Stops the itching around sores. Heals while you work. DESCRIBE CASE and get FREE SAMPLE. Bayles Distributing Co., 1800 Grand, Kansas City, Mo.

PATENTS—WATSON E. COLEMAN, Washington, D. C. [illegible] free. Highest references. [illegible]

MAGIC tricks [illegible] HOMER H. HOWRY Co. Los Angeles Cal

TOO FAT TO WORK!

This good woman had become so fat that she was utterly exhausted after the midday meal. Her temper became so irritable that she finally refused to do any work after two o'clock in the day, feeling that she was rapidly becoming an invalid. Women in such a case have lost over 60 pounds by the treatment prescribed by Dr. Brough, and are healthy, cheerful, active and appear several years younger.

THE DANGERS OF OBESITY

Heat Prostration, Sunstroke or Apoplexy causing quick Death, or followed by Softening of the Brain, Heart Disease, Stomach Cramps, Food Poisoning, Severe Bowel Disorders, General Debility and Complete Lacking of Vital Energy are a few of the serious troubles which are most liable to come upon the fat man or woman during warm, humid weather. There are numerous lesser yet distressing ailments such as skin rash, chafing, offensive perspiration, nervousness, headache, flatulence, etc. Hot weather is very weakening and depressing for fat people; it is seldom possible to be really contented. The body becomes even larger, the fat is packed-in more tightly than ever, around the vital organs and dangerous trouble is thereby stored up for the future. Fat people die 10 to 40 years too soon. Obesity (corpulency) is an acknowledged disease. It ruins health, figure, complexion, temper and peace of mind. It never cures itself but becomes worse as the person grows older. The time to check its progress and get rid of superfluous fat is now. Mine is the reliable, safe and quick home treatment. I have thousands of testimonials; here are a few:

FATNESS SHORTENS LIFE

Mrs. A. A. BRANTLEY, Providence, Ky., writes: "I have now lost 56 pounds. I am recommending your treatment to all I see."

Mrs. FRANCIS HOFF, Beaver Dam, writes: "I am 30 pounds less and cannot praise your treatment enough. It has done me lots of good in health and appearance."

Mrs. W. B. HANLEY, Chicago, writes: "I have lost 40 pounds. I shall always remember you as the best friend for fat women."

Mr. WILLIAM MENZEL, Minnesota, writes: "I have lost 119 pounds. I sleep good and have lots of strength and vigor. My health is good."

Mrs. N. A. LINK, Preston, writes: "Have lost 35 or more pounds. My kidneys seem to be much better, as I do not bloat nearly so bad."

Mrs. WM. H. MART, Cleveland, Ohio, writes: "You talk about a happy woman, that is what I am. I was so full of rheumatism I could hardly walk a step. I could not sleep nights. I can thank your treatment for my good health. I weighed 280 pounds. I now weigh 200 and am still losing."

Mrs. GEORGE KYLE, Junction City, writes: "I have reduced 30 pounds. I can go upstairs much easier than I could before. I will gladly recommend your treatment."

Mrs. E. M. MORGAN, Massachusetts, writes: "I have lost 60 to 65 pounds. My waist was 38 inches, abdomen was 48 inches, bust measure 44 inches. Now my bust measure is 34 inches, waist measure 26 inches, and abdomen measure is 33 inches. No wrinkles, no biliousness or stomach trouble whatever."

Summer is the Best Season for Fat Reduction

FREE Treatment I know the merits of my method so well that I will send a proof treatment free. No starvation; you can eat any kind of food or drink any kind of beverage you like. No tiresome exercising. Absolutely no dangerous drugs. Mine is a modern, scientific, successful system. In many cases weight reduction is one pound daily. Ladies find mine an unequalled beautifying method; double chin and wrinkles disappear. Remember, you pay nothing for proof treatment; it is free to fat people, (men or women). Write today for my FREE TREATMENT, and my BOOK ON OBESITY. Address:

DR F.T. BROUGH, 930 BROUGH BLDG., EAST 22D ST., NEW YORK CITY

NOTE.—Dr. Brough is a diplomated, practising physician, licensed and registered by the State of N. Y.; famous as a reliable, conscientious specialist in reducing fat and [illegible] treatment.

$4,000 CASH and FUN in W. D. BOYCE CO. (The Farming Business) GREAT HOME PICTUREGAME—FREE TO ALL

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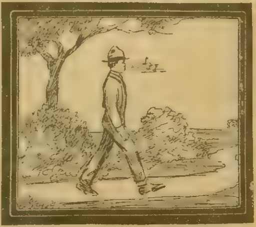

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It All Went in the Bill
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CHAPTER VI.

"M-M-M-ARK!" but that was as far as Bantam could get, because his voice utterly failed him again.

The boys had made for the window and were looking out, Mark grasping the loaded double-barrel shotgun in his nervous hands. Tho the moon was shining from what seemed to be a clear sky, still the light looked misty and uncertain.

Nevertheless both felt sure that they saw a crouching figure hurrying past the side of the toolhouse; and Mark, bent on giving the prowler a scare, even if the birdshot scattered too much at such a distance to do any particular damage, immediately leveled his gun and fired; after which he pulled the second trigger.

It was really quite hard to be positive, but they had an idea that some sort of response followed the shots. It might have been a yelp from the quarry, or a cry of alarm from one of the suddenly awakened children; for the reports must have aroused everybody in the house, they sounded so loud in the open window.

"Let's get into our clothes, so as to go out and see if any damage has been done," said Mark, as he hastily replaced the empty shells with fresh ones, after the manner of a true hunter.

Of course Bantam was nothing loath, and indeed so eager did he seem to learn the facts that he could only with exceeding great difficulty manage to don his garments, so as to be with his chum when the latter jumped out thru the window.

They found that the lock was still on the door, and apparently nothing had been harmed; but Bantam declared that only for their forethought in laying such an elegant trap, some harm must have come to the new motorcycle, which would have angered the proud possessor very much indeed.

"What time is it, anyway?" asked Bantam, when they had even opened the toolhouse and found everything just as they had left it.

"About one, I should say," replied the other, glancing up toward the moon, and noting its position in the sky; for Mark had learned how to count the passage of time during nights by always knowing about where the prominent heavenly bodies ought to be at certain hours, a splendid thing for any wide-awake boy to practice for his own profit and amusement.

"Huh! mebbe they might come again, Mark?" suggested Bantam. "And next time they'd be on the lookout for strings that had been fixed to ketch their feet. What had we ought to do about it, say?"

Mark himself was troubled. He realized that it was even as his chum had said; and the thought of sleeping so close by, while these marauders might be marring the beauty of his motorcycle, filled him with both anxiety and anger.

"I've got a good notion to bring a blanket out here, and spend the rest of this night alongside the machine," he went on to declare.

"But there ain't room for both of us, I'm afraid," the other said, as he contemplated the narrow space, and then his own ample form.

"That's as sure as you're born, Bantam, and I reckon it'd be up to you to crawl back in my bed and get your sleep there. I wouldn't wink an eyelid if I tried to stay indoors while the shanty out here was unguarded. So that's how I'll fix it; and let's both be going back now."

Evidently Bantam hardly liked the new arrangement, but he readily saw that what his friend said was the truth; there was only the scantiest room for one of them to camp alongside the precious motorcycle; and when it came to a choice, of course the owner ought to be the guardian.

When Mark came out again he carried a blanket and a pillow along with him, ditto the faithful little smooth-bore gun.

"If they get to bothering you," Bantam told him, as he walked away, "just tickle 'em under the short ribs with a few of them number eights, after they get far enough away so you won't hurt the skunks too bad. And tomorrow we'll count to see how many fellers are limpin' around Cumminsville."

The idea seemed to give the stout boy considerable amusement, for he was chuckling to himself at a great rate when Mark left the window.

After making himself a rude bed there on the hard floor, using one of his blankets underneath so as to ease the sensation, Mark tried to settle down to sleep. But of course it was next to impossible for him to keep from thinking of all manner of things, while lying there in the toolhouse; for his brain had been well aroused by the sudden awakening, and the subsequent necessity for firing the gun at the dimly seen intruder.

He must have lain there for nearly an hour, turning from side to side as his ribs began to ache, before finally drowsiness claimed him, and he passed away into the realms of sleep. When he opened his eyes again it was broad daylight, and close on 5 o'clock, he judged. Hardly had he started to yawning and stretching, at the same time laughing softly to himself as he contemplated his queer surroundings, than he heard a sound of footsteps outside; then came a knock at the door, and the voice of his chum demanding to know if he were "alive and kicking."

Mark soon opened the door, and as he had lain down partly dressed he was able to make his way to his own room with the blankets, there to finish getting into his clothes.

The momentous night had passed, and no damage was done; but Mark had settled in his own mind that he could not afford to have all this worry every night; and that he would arrange matters so that the motorcycle could be stored in the cellar, even if a bit troublesome to move up and down the half-dozen steps leading to that part of the house. Here no one could get at it to tamper with his valuable possession; and if he were careful it would not turn out to be a nuisance to his mother, with the gasoline odor. It happened that the cellar was very dry, too, and this fact pleased him, since he would not wish to take any chances of having some of the bright exposed steel parts turn rusty.

In this way, then, he had fixed matters in his own mind; for it was always Mark's method to plan ahead; and the boy who falls into the habit of doing this always has a double chance of accomplishing things.

"Nothing happened after you came out here, I s'pose?" remarked Bantam, when the other rejoined him at the toolhouse.

"If it did I never heard about it," rejoined Mark; "for once I got asleep I must have been dead to the world. First thing that struck me was seeing the bright daylight, and hearing you stamping along outside."

"Well, anyhow, we scared that crowd off, and they missed fire. If Ferdy wasn't along with 'em just as like as not we'll see him going past before long on his buzz-wheel, and a-lookin' in here as hard as he can, expectin' to ketch us a-weepin' and a-wailin' over the muss they made with your new machine. I wouldn't put it past that sharper to stop and come in to tell you what a shame it was, and what a contemptible snake a feller must be that could scheme to injure a lovely machine like yours was—just so he could feast his eyes on the wreck, you know."

"Well, I'm thinking he must have been along last night, because he'd want to make sure the fellows he hired did the job up brown," said Mark; "and if that was so, then of course he'd know it was nixie. But let's forget all that, because I'm so happy that I don't want to bother about Ferdy and his jealousy any more than I can help."

"There's a kind of chap that won't let you forget he's alive if he can help it; and that's Ferdy's style," Bantam told him. "He may have made a bad mess of it this time, but there's another day coming, and mebbe you won't always be on the job watching."

"When he finds me napping he'll know it," Mark told him.

"I guess that's so, because they say it's next to impossible to nab a weasel asleep; and you're as sharp as one, Mark. But I ought to be hustling across to my house pretty soon."

"What for?" demanded the other. "You're invited to eat breakfast with me this fine morning, to make up for the many times I've been over at your house. And didn't I hear mother say she was going to have buckwheats this time, which I know are one of your weaknesses."

At that Bantam threw up his arms in token of surrender, and after a great sigh remarked:

"At what time did you say your folks had breakfast, Mark? Not that I'm in any hurry, remember, but I just want to let my appetite know, so it won't give me the bother it sometimes does over home when I'm up early, and the girl hasn't even made the kitchen fire."

"Well, what do you do then to keep from starving to death?" asked Mark.

"P'raps I hadn't ought to tell you," Bantam went on; "for fear you might get into bad habits; but you see, my maw knows my failings, and every once so often she has Belinda make a big stone crock full of crullers, real New England style; and I know the combination of the safe. Fact is, that crock has been a real life-saver lots of times for me, when I get up too soon mornings."

"All right, just wait here," laughed Mark; "I know of a combination in our kitchen that works something like that; only it happens to be cold apple pie with me. Get your mouth fixed for something good, Bantam, while I'm gone."

Bantam tried to tell him not to bother; but somehow he did not seem able to get the words out before Mark had trotted off; and he was not laboring under any undue stress of excitement, either. Perhaps it was the fierce struggle between bashfulness and appetite that twisted up his tongue that time.

Mark was gone quite a little while, and in order that he might not appear too anxious the stout boy started to prowl around, as tho looking to see whether he could discover where some of the shot fired by his chum had landed; for he remembered that at the time the seeming skulking figure, so dimly seen, had been outlined against a pile of new lumber that Mr. Fletcher intended using in his garden, as he was a great hand to raise celery, and wished to have it well bleached in the early fall.

Here Mark found him on his return, bearing two big wedges of thick apple pie, and not made from dried fruit, either.

"Come over here, Mark; I've got something to show you!" called the stout boy, as he waved his arm in an enticing way.

"Well, take charge of that, then, and see how you like mother's pie!" remarked the other, as he came up, and thrust one of the wedges in the hand of his chum, at the same time biting into his own section.

Bantam looked at his prize. He wanted to says something; but the temptation to fill his mouth was so great he could not resist it; so he made a half-moon in the crust, and once started nothing could stop him until the very last bit had been duly devoured.

"And now, what was it you meant to tell me?" asked Mark, who had likewise managed to dispose of his portion in a satisfactory manner, if one could judge from the pleased expression on his face.

"That's so, I near forgot," remarked Bantam, once more bestirring himself. "You just take a squint down here, and tell me what you see, will you?"

At first Mark shook his head, as tho rather mystified at what the other was saying; but as he looked more closely he must have made some sort of discovery that aroused his interest, because he started, and bent lower, giving utterance to an exclamation at the same time.

"Get on to it, don't you?" demanded Bantam, eagerly.

"It's sure a speck of dried blood!" Mark declared solemnly.

"Just that, and nothing more," added the other; "and you can see from that, Mark, it was a little howl we heard last night after you fired your second shot; because you punctured that skunk some in the leg; and I bet you he limped away. Served him right, the coward!"

CHAPTER VII.

"SEEMS like you might be right, there, Bantam," Mark admitted, after discovering that there were other tiny specks on the boards, showing where the prowler had started off, after being "peppered" by the shot; and somehow it gave the boy a queer feeling to think that he had been the prime cause for this wound, however slight.

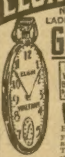
"Oh! there ain't any question about the same, Mark," the other went on to say, in a satisfied tone of voice; "and next time I go downtown, me to keep my peepers wide open to find out what boy among the friends of Ferdy Clifford walks Spanish, and gives the secret away. A limp is sometimes as good as a nod, let me tell you."

"Finding this telltale spot gives me an idea we might run across something else if we only looked," Mark informed his chum, as he commenced moving about, with his head close to the ground, for all the world, as Bantam declared, "like a hound in search of a lost scent."

"What's got you now, Mark; are you trying to find a trail?" demanded the stout boy with the short legs, as he began to follow the other around.

"Just what I'm doing, and meeting with a whole lot of success, too," came the immediate answer.

"Whee! that sounds good to me," said Bantam; "but if you've got no objections, suppose you open up and help me over



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the fence. I honestly confess that I'm away off in this sort of Boy Scout game."

"Well, look here, and here, if you want to see what I mean," continued Mark. "Now, this footprint isn't very plain, but you can see that it was made by a pretty big shoe. I'd give a guess that a fellow close on the heft of Dan Powers left that mark behind him. Get that, don't you, Bantan?"

"Y-e-s, sure I do, Mark; and say, ain't that a speck of blood alongside the imprint you're pointing at?"

"I was just going to show you that," remarked the other, "and by the token, you won't have to look far to find one fellow who feels like limping, tho he may put on a bold face, and try not to show that he's lame, for fear of being picked out and arrested."

"This is fine work, let me tell you, Chum Mark, and goes ahead of anything I ever heard tell of. And is that the only kind of footprint you pick up around the toolhouse?"

"So far it seems to be; but hold on, here's another breed, and about as plain a track as you'd want to see," Mark went on to exclaim, with some little show of excitement, as he again bent low, falling on his knees the better to examine his latest discovery.

"Wow! Looks like a narrow shoe had made that!" Bantam remarked.

"And who wears the narrowest shoe among all the boys in Cumminsville?" demanded his companion, triumphantly.

"Want the answer to that?" chuckled the short boy. "Well, here it is: Ferdy Clifford, who always has been pretty much of a dude dresser; he's the answer."

"Correct! Go up to the head of the class, Bantam. You've guessed it first pop. Ferdy was here on the spot as sure as anything. He wanted to see the fun, and at the same time know he was getting something back for the good money he had to hand over to the worker bees, Dan Powers, and p'raps Butch Bradford or Sandy Griswold, for that bunch nearly always hunt together, and where you find one you're apt to run up against the lot."

Thereupon Bantam became excited again.

"Oh! look close, Mark, please look sharp, and tell me if you can see whether Ferdy got tipped by any of that double dose of birdshot you scattered around. I'd give a cooky to know he had, and you'd see me the happiest feller in all Cumminsville if I could notice just a little halt in his walk this morning."

"Well, you'll hardly be able to do that," Mark told him, after some little time spent in examining the trail; "because so far as I can find out there isn't anything happened to Ferdy. Like as not he was hiding behind something all the time, and just poking his nose out. He's like the army officer who'll get behind a tree, wave his sword, and yell: 'Go on, my brave boys; eat 'em up!' but all the while is mighty careful not to expose his own hide."

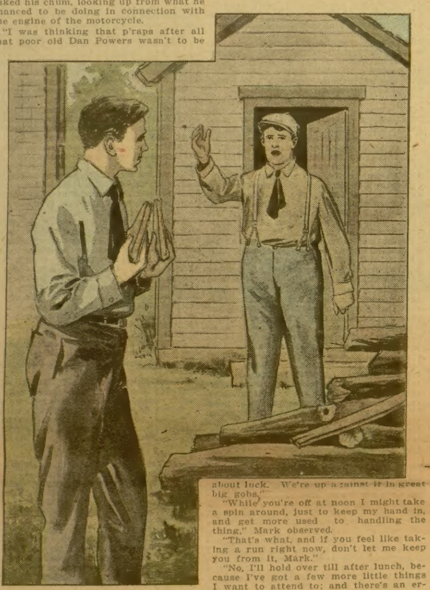
"Huh!" grunted Bantam, disconsolately, "guess you're about right there, Mark; and we'll have to give it up. But it's some satisfaction to know you pinked one sneaker, ain't it? If I only knew Ferdy got a few as he ran, and would have to eat all his meals standing up for the next week, I'd nearly take a fit. But then that would be too good to be true."

As there did not seem to be any use in trying to follow the trail of the runners any farther, since it only led to the fence alongside the turnpike, where the frightened bunch must have come together and made their way back to town, sadder and wiser because of their experience, the two boys returned to the toolhouse. Here they busied themselves doing numerous little things, and waiting to be called to breakfast.

Bantam was heard to chuckle presently.

"What's struck you as funny now?" asked his chum, looking up from what he chanced to be doing in connection with the engine of the motorcycle.

"I was thinking that p'raps after all that poor old Dan Powers wasn't to be blamed so much for being as bad as he is," Bantam went on to say quickly.



"Come over here, Mark!"

"I can see that you've got something like a joke in your system," remarked the other, who knew the signs only too well; "so get it out before you choke. Why isn't Dan, who's always been a big hulking bully, according to the notion of all the fellows I know, to be blamed for his badness?"

"Why," said Bantam, triumphantly, "because just now he belongs in the led astray class—the little shot pellets he's a-carryin' around loose with him, you know!"

"Oh! I think you must feel weak after such a fierce effort; and there's mother on the back stoop, waving to us, right now; so come along and wash up," and speaking in this vein, Mark led the way to where on a bench there were a tin basin and soap for his particular use when working in the garden.

Of course, at the table the boys had to tell what the apparent cause of the night alarm had been, tho possibly keeping a little of it back; because the three younger children were listening with great interest, and as Mark well knew, "little pitchers often have great ears," and there was no need of spreading it around town that they strongly suspected Ferdy of having engineered the affair; because he might demand that they prove it, which would not be easy to do.

Mr. Fletcher was naturally indignant, tho he laughed when he heard that it seemed some of the shot must have found a target, and that perhaps some fellow in Cumminsville would be found to walk rather stiffly for a few days. He agreed with his son that the precious wheel would have to be kept in the cellar after that, and relied on Mark to arrange things so that it would not become a nuisance to the good housewife while there.

And the two chums spent pretty much the entire morning pottering around Mark's handsome present. It seemed almost like a dream to both of them that such a splendid outcome to the adventure with the black bull should have come about; and apparently Mark felt that he could only become accustomed to believing the truth by hanging around where he could feast his eyes on the beauty, and touch it a thousand times.

"What bully times I c'n see loomin' up ahead of us," Bantam would say every little while. "By now my letter must sure be in the hands of that firm, and at noon I'm going to send a wire telling them I must have it started by night, or I might not be able to use the same. And say, when I lay me down tonight in my own little bed what a comfort it's going to be to know that my motorcycle is on the express a-headin' this way. Yum! yum! Talk to me about luck. We're up against it in great big gobs."

"While you're off at noon I might take a spin around, just to keep my hand in, and get more used to handling the thing," Mark observed.

"That's what, and if you feel like taking a run right now, don't let me keep you from it, Mark."

"No, I'll hold over till after lunch, because I've got a few more little things I want to attend to; and there's an errand I might do for mother at the same time. Nothing like killing two birds with one stone, you know, Bantam."

"Unless it's hittin' two prowlers with one charge of shot," added the other.

"You're feeling quite put out over that business, I'm afraid," declared Mark. "If you had the say every shot would have landed, so as to count for something.. But as for me, I reckon it was good enough as it went. I don't feel so venomous about that Dan Powers, because he's never had more than half a chance. You know what kind of home life he's led all his years, with a drunken father. Ferdy ought to know better; but even then, there are some people who say things that are pretty hard about Mr. Clifford, and the way he got hold of some of the properties that have made him rich. Like father, like son; and Ferdy may not be so smart as his dad, so that when he misses connections some fine day, the chances are he'll land in jail for doing something the law won't stand for, and all his father's money can't get him off."

That proposition rather staggered Bantam, for he had not thought of such a dire disaster falling upon the other boy. He did not say anything further about feeling disappointed because there was no evidence to show that Ferdy had shared some of the birdshot with big, hulking Dan. As Mark said, they should be contented with the way things had turned out, and not wish for a whole "avalanche" to fall upon the heads of the plotters.

"Anyhow," Bantam broke out, later on, as he sat there with his arms about his doubled-up knees, and watched his chum fuss around with a bit of cotton waste in his hand, wiping off superfluous lubricating oil wherever he could find it, and just "petting" the handsome machine with loving taps; "anyway, there's one good thing about me owning a motorcycle, which is that my short legs ain't going to count against me any more. These machines are great levelers, because the dwarf is able to keep alongside the long-legged sprinter. It's only a question of nerve, and sitting your saddle straight."

"But if you happen to make the wrong turn," chuckled Mark, "you'll find that a motorcycle is sure the greatest leveler you ever heard tell about; that is, if you happen to have enough sense left in your head after they pick you out of the side ditch or the frog pond, to think anything at all."

"Oh, I'm goin' to be careful, I tell you," declared the other, raising his right hand as tho on the witness stand. "I c'n guess what it would mean for a feller as heavy as me to go squash up against a tree trunk. Bet you I'd be as flat as a pancake if that ever happened, and you could use me for a postage stamp. But let me tell you this, that if ever my wheel does play me a trick, and try to run away with me, I intend to pick out a puddle of water to get dumped into. There you've got a chance to swim, and won't get your head cracked. You wait and see if I don't."

"Well, all I hope is that you never will have to try that plan out, because it can't be the nicest thing going," Mark told him; tho at the same time he was compelled to smile at the idea of his stout chum going head-first into some pond, with a splash that would frighten all the little frogs and fishes nearly to death.

And in this fashion the boys passed the whole morning. When noon came Bantam betook himself to his own home for lunch, promising to return by three, when he expected that the owner of the new motorcycle would have completed his little run over the country roads, and that they could again sit around, chatting and laying wonderful plans for the future, when the second motorcycle should have been delivered at Bantam's house, and the proud possessor had learned how to control his mile-a-minute steel horse.

CHAPTER VIII.

SOMETIMES dreams actually come true; and when less than a week had passed by it was very evident that this had happened in the cases of Mark and his chum Bantam; for the farmers fully twenty miles away from Cumminsville met two leather-clad boys on new motorcycles, riding tandem, that is, one behind the other to avoid the possibility of accidents from collision; and the stout chap perched in the saddle of the rear machine had all the "earmarks" of being no other than Bantam Lightfoot.

Yes, his steel steed had come on time, thanks to the urgent message sent over the telegraph wires that noon; and with it all the accessories mentioned along with the original order; so that for some days now he had been taking lessons at the hands of his more expert chum, and could really manage very well.

When a fellow has ridden a bicycle for years, it does not come so hard for him to advance to a motorcycle, since the balancing art has been well learned; and after all it is the quick judgment, the trained eye, and the possession of due caution that make the successful rider of the "gas-wheel."

Of course Bantam had had a few little accidents, nothing serious, luckily. He carried some scratches on his face; and several fingers still felt stiff from coming in contact with the hard ground too suddenly, with all his weight on top; but so far he had done nobly, and was greatly encouraged to believe that he might be a success as a motorcycle rider.

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Would you like to get a lot of letters, circulars and packages? You probably know that manufacturers, supply houses, wholesalers and publishers buy names and addresses for the purpose of sending samples, advertising matter, papers and circulars to. Good names and addresses are hard to get and are quite expensive. We publish an AGENT'S DIRECTORY LIST containing names and addresses carefully arranged in alphabetical order. We send these Directory Lists to concerns we know are anxious for good names to send advertising matter to. Write your name very plainly so the printer will not make a mistake; be sure to give your street number and town also plainly written so that any mail addressed to you will reach you without fail. We have been publishing the Agent's Directory List for several years and refer you to the editor of this paper who will tell you we are reliable. All we ask is that you send 10 cents in silver and we will enter your name in our Agent's Directory List as above stated. Write today. Address

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FREE CATARRH TREATMENT

MY OFFER OF MAY 20th and 27th IN BOYCE'S WEEKLIES

Brings So Much Joy

In the May 20th and 27th issues of Boyce's Weeklies I made the following offer: that I would give Catarrh Treatments absolutely free of charge to be distributed among the readers of Boyce's Weeklies. That offer has been received with so much satisfaction, so many grateful letters have come to me from it, that my heart is filled with joy.

Therefore, I have decided to repeat the offer and am making this announcement. I will give away, absolutely free of charge, 250 more Catarrh treatments. My method of treatment I believe to be one of the best that was ever formulated for Catarrh and allied ailments. The method has cured hundreds of suffering ones, after everything else has failed. Now, Reader, this is your chance. ALL YOU have got to do is to write for this treatment and see it for yourself.

Listen to these grateful words: "My nose cleared, my foul breath left me, the continual succession of colds, the crusts in my nose, that bad taste in the mouth mornings, the dull headachy feeling in my forehead, the constant desire to clear my throat, all these vanished. They all went, one by one, some faster, some slower, but all equally sure. I once more have that joyous, lively feeling, same as I had in the glad days of youth, free from all care and pain." **Wouldn't you like to be in that happy condition?**

A PRESENT FOR YOU

Remember, I make this offer of a free gift, wholly from my desire to do you good. I want no money for it; you will be under no obligation to me whatsoever.

Now, Reader, this is the opportunity of a lifetime; let it slip and you may never have such another again. Don't neglect it, just write to-day. Send a postal card or your full name and address in a letter, and you will have one of these famous Threefold treatments by return mail. Address

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306 Trade Building, ... Boston, Mass.

The machine, while even newer than Mark's, showed signs of wear and tear. After all, an up-to-date motorcycle with its engine is pretty heavy, and when a careless act on the part of the rider causes it to fall on its side, even if he succeeds in jumping out from under, something is bound to get scratched.

But so long as no vital damage resulted, Bantam did not bother. He was rather in the same class as Ferdy Clifford with respect to having a fond and well-to-do parent, who would supply him with ample means for purchasing another machine if the necessity arose.

The two chums had gone on several little trips, but so far nothing extended had been attempted. Mark believed it to be the part of wisdom to hold off until the other had managed to get the hang of things better. It is no fun to have an accident happen to one's motorcycle when many miles away from home, and perhaps not a single garage within reach where the mending can be done; and altho Mark had not been thru such an experience he could understand what it meant.

But now that Bantam seemed to be doing so well, they began to talk about the first long run they had been laying out ahead. The objective point was Niagara Falls, a place neither of the boys had ever visited, and which, of course, they had long wished to see.

It was on a Monday that the last arrangements were made, and the boys looked forward to starting bright and early the following morning, with a week of pleasure ahead.

Mark was expecting his chum after lunch, and of course, as Bantam and his new machine were almost inseparable by now, that meant he would make the trifling run in the saddle. Besides, he had said that he wanted Mark to go over his engine for the last time, and tighten several suspicious nuts that might play havoc with the rider on a long and heavy run.

So when Mark heard the familiar rapid exhaust which he knew so well, he hardly bothered looking up from what he was doing, understanding that Bantam would soon push his machine into the yard, and join him there. To his surprise, when he raised his eyes to see the other standing there, holding on to his cycle, he read something in Bantam's face that troubled him.

"What's gone wrong now, Bantam?" he demanded quickly.

"Oh! something's had to happen that may mean a little change in our program, that's all, Mark," replied the other, still looking serious.

And then Mark noticed that his chum seemed to have secured various small packages to his machine, altho they had expected to do this during the evening, so as to be all ready for an early start.

"Well, seems like you are in a big hurry, I must say. What's all this mean?" and Mark pointed to the burdens which gave Bantam's machine something of the look of a peddler's contraption.

"I've said good-by to my maw, Mark; and if you'll only agree to stand by me, I don't expect to go back home again tonight," was the still more puzzling answer made by the stout boy.

"You've got to tell me about that," declared Mark, who began to understand that after all it might not be simply an idle notion on the part of Bantam.

The other carefully adjusted the stand under the rear wheel, and then turned upon his friend.

"I'm a-goin' to do that same as fast as I can, Mark," he said; "only I don't want to get any more excited than I c'n help; because you know I'm apt to lose my gift of gab when that happens."

"All right, then. Keep perfectly cool; only please open up, and give me an idea of what you mean by fixing up like you wanted to start right off, instead of waiting for the morning."

"I will, Mark, only let me do it my own way," Bantam assured him. "And first of all, tell me if I prove to you that I have to get away right now, in a big hurry, would you go along with me?"

"If that doesn't beat anything I ever heard!" exclaimed the other boy, staring at his chum as tho he fancied Bantam might have lost his senses.

"Never mind, but answer that question first," continued the other; "because, of course, I'd hate like everything to have to make the run alone; but it's got to be done, if I want to save mother a big pile of money!"

"What's that you're telling me? You don't mean to say your mother's been robbed, Bantam?" cried the other, stiffening up suddenly.

"Well, not yet, so to speak; but unless I can manage somehow to get in touch with old Judge Whiting, who is somewhere up on the road to Old Forge, looking out after some iron ore prospectors he's got working for him there among the mountains, and fetch back certain papers he's been intending to bring my mother, and all this before Thursday at 6 p. m., it looks like the syndicate controlled by Mr. Clifford and some other smart speculators will win, hands down."

"Wake up, Bantam! What are you giving me?" demanded the amazed Mark, trying to see some trace of joking about the other, but considerably to his surprise failing to do so.

"I tell you it's just as I say," continued Bantam, clenching his teeth, and with an appealing look in his eye. "Breaks me all up to have to spoil our fine plans this way, Mark, sure it does; but what's a feller goin' to do about it when his own mother's near in a collapse over making the discovery that she'd gone and counted a week out of the way. You see, she figured there was plenty of time to get the papers, and that the Judge he was sure to be along next week. Then she found where she'd figured wrong, and that unless somebody got in touch with her lawyer she stood to be a big loser in the game. Say, can you go? That's the most important thing of all, Mark. I need you, you bet I do, the worst kind; and if I try the game all by myself there's a mighty poor chance of beating that Clifford crowd out."

Mark began to bestir himself, now that he saw the other was in dead earnest. It all seemed so strange and sudden that he had some difficulty in grasping the facts; but then Mark was a quick-witted fellow, and could grapple with an emergency, as we have seen before.

"Why, if it is really true that you have to start out on a long trip like that, of course I wouldn't think of letting you go alone. You know you can count on me standing by you. As to our other affair in the direction of the Falls, why, we can put that off for a while, if we have to. The summer's long, and there's plenty of time to manage that."

Bantam thrust out his hand and clutched that of his chum. There were actually tears in his eyes as he continued to wring it earnestly, showing that he must have been deeply moved by what his mother had said to him since he last parted from Mark.

"Of course, I expected you to say something like that, Mark," he observed, in an unsteady tone; "because you're just a brick, that's what. And while you're packing a few things on your machine, I'll try and explain this thing further, tho what I've already said covers the ground."

"And I'll be as quick as I can, Bantam," the other assured him.

After all, Bantam did not know much more than he had already told. His mother, it seemed, had a part of her money invested in such a way that she found herself actually in competition with a group of capitalists who were represented by Mr. Clifford. If those valuable papers were not in Cumminsville by 6 o'clock on the coming Thursday, it would mean that the syndicate would pocket many thousands of dollars, and the loss must fall upon the widow, because she had failed to keep the correct tally.

"If we c'n only run across Judge Whiting; that's the thing that bothers me most," Bantam went on to say disconsolately; "but then, I'm banking a whole lot on your horse sense in such things, Mark. If anybody can find him it'd be you. Only we've got to keep our eyes about us for trouble; because my maw thinks that Mr. Clifford must know what sort of a game he's up against; and if he sees us start out like we meant to chase up Old Forge way, he'd guess that we meant to hunt up Judge Whiting, you see; and if he could give us any trouble he would."

"It's a pretty mixed-up mess to me, Bantam, I own," Mark told him; "and all I seem able to make out of it is that you've just got to get in touch with this old lawyer, and be back by Thursday at six in the evening; also, that it would be to the interest of Mr. Clifford and the men who are in with him, to see that we fell down on the job. That's enough to start on. As we get along, p'r'aps we might figure it out better. And let me tell you we can pull the wool over the eyes of anybody that watches us go away, by heading as if we meant to take the Niagara trip, after all."

"Yes, that's so, Mark; and after we get a ways out of town there's a road I know about that will carry us around, so we'll head for the northeast straight."

Meanwhile Mark was busily engaged. He had made ample preparations ahead, being one of those thoughtful fellows who do not leave things until the last minute; so that it did not require a great deal of work to fasten his belongings to his motorcycle.

When he had completed this task he darted into the house to say good-by to his mother and the others; also planning to drop off at the station for a minute to let his father know how a sudden emergency had decided them to make an earlier start than they had figured on.

Fifteen minutes later the two boys were leaving their home town on the road that headed toward the west, that being the route they had expected to take when laying their plans for the Niagara trip. A number of boys who were playing marbles, or spinning tops, shouted out after them and waved their hats, as tho wishing the two lucky ones all manner of good things.

It was quite a different start from the one they had anticipated taking; but as Mark glanced from time to time at his comrade, coming along not far in the rear, he told himself that he stood ready to make even greater sacrifices than this for such a good fellow as Bantam. What lay ahead of them, of course, neither of the motorcycle boys could guess, but they had brave hearts, and believed that even tho difficulties might cross their path they could grapple successfully with anything of this sort.

And having reached the crossroads Mark turned to the right, intending to make almost a half-circle, so that they might take up their real course, which would lead them away off toward the distant Adirondacks.

This interesting story will be continued in the next issue of the Ledger. During the coming months many great stories will appear in these columns. If you are not already a subscriber for this paper, it will repay you to send in a year's subscription. It costs you only $1.00, and you will never regret it. Let us hear from you at once.

* * *

Janie's Way.

The young man was in love. He had declared his passion to the young lady and she had passed him along to father. Father listened to his tale patiently.

"It is all right so far as I am concerned," the old gentleman said, "but I am afraid that Janie will not marry you."

"Oh, don't say that," the young man pleaded. "Has she—has she said so?"

"No," said the old gentleman, "but from what I know of Janie, if she had wanted you she would have taken you without referring you to me."

For All Pain

"The efficiency of any drug," says Dr. C. P. Robbins, "is known to us by the results we obtain from its use. If we are able to control pain and disease by means of any preparation, we certainly are warranted in its use. One of the principal symptoms of all diseases is pain, and this is what the patient most often applies to us for, i. e., something to relieve his pain. If we can arrest this promptly the patient is most liable to trust in us for the other remedies which will effect a permanent cure. One remedy which I have used largely in my practice is anti-kamnia tablets. Many and varied are their uses. I have put them to the test on many occasions, and have never been disappointed. I found them especially valuable for headaches of malarial origin, where quinine was being taken. They appear to prevent the bad after-effects of the quinine. Anti-kamnia tablets are also excellent for the headaches from improper digestion; also for headaches of a neuralgic origin, and especially for women subject to pains at certain times. Two anti-kamnia tablets give prompt relief, and in a short time the patient is able to go about as usual." These tablets may be obtained at all druggists. Ask for A-K Tablets. They are also unexcelled for headaches, neuralgia and all pain.

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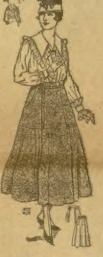

9121 Blouse with Deep Collar, 34 to 44 bust.

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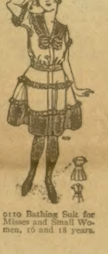

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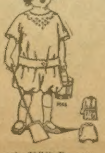

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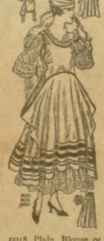
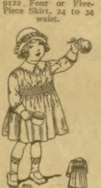


9018 Plain Blouse or Guimpe, 34 to 44 bust.

9128 Bodice with Draped Tunic, 34 to 42 bust.

8785 Straight Skirt with Adjustable Shirrings, Small 26 or 28, Medium 30 or 32, Large 34 or 36 waist.



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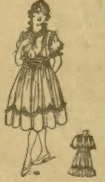

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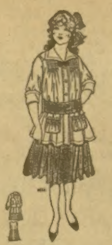
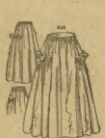


9124 Girl's Dress, 8 to 14 years.



9116 Gathered Skirt, 24 to 30 waist.

HOW TO GET THE FREE PATTERNS

Here is the way we will do it: To every one who will send us one dollar for a year's subscription to the Chicago Ledger we will send absolutely free five pattern coupons. Each coupon will be good for one pattern and you can select the patterns from those illustrated in any issue of the Chicago Ledger. When you see a pattern that you like all you have to do is to send us a coupon and it will be sent to you at once. In this way you will have hundreds of patterns from which to pick the five that you will be entitled to, and you have all the time you need to pick out the ones you want.

These patterns are the best that can be made. Each pattern gives full directions for the cutting and making, with information as to the amount of cloth required, etc., so that any one can make any of the designs illustrated with no trouble at all. At the same time, they are so stylish and accurately cut that dressmakers and seamstresses all over the country will be quick to take advantage of this liberal offer. Some will subscribe for two years so they can get ten coupons. These designs are made by the best designers and modists of New York and Paris, and are up-to-the-minute in fashion and beauty.

We treat old and new customers alike on this splendid offer. If you are already a subscriber send in a dollar and we will send you the five pattern coupons and extend your subscription one year from the time it now expires.

To get these five coupons entitling you to five patterns, fill out the blank below and enclose it with one dollar for a year's subscription to the Chicago Ledger. Do this now—today! No woman should be without the Ledger's Pattern Coupon Book. Be among the thousands of women who will get these coupons.

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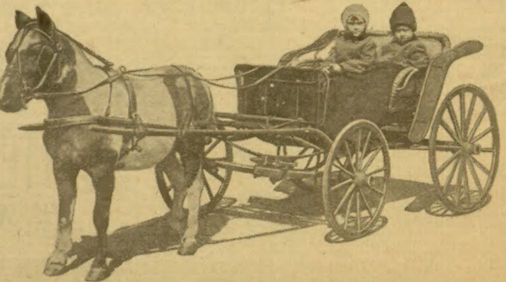
If you wish any pattern from those advertised in this issue, mark the number and size on the margin and we will retain a coupon for each pattern we send you when we send you the Coupon Book. (Order by size and number.) **Coupons good for six months.**

"CHUM" AND OUTFIT FREE

"Chum" is the most beautiful and lovable pony you ever saw; a full-blooded, registered Shetland Pony about 42 inches high and weighing about 300 pounds, just like you see in the picture. With "Chum" we send a complete outfit consisting of pony carriage, nickel silver-mounted harness, saddle and bridle. "Chum" and the entire outfit will be sent to the winner free of all charges. There is nothing to pay for, not even express. We pay everything and deliver "Chum" and outfit right to you



Wouldn't you be the proudest and happiest person in the world if you owned "Chum" and his outfit? You can do it if you will solve the puzzle and mail the coupon now, right away. Think of the fun you could have with "Chum," taking your friends out for a drive or riding him on horseback to school. "Chum" knows lots of tricks now and learns tricks very easily. A real Shetland Pony like "Chum" is the most companionable and friendly pony that you ever saw.

Hundreds of boys and girls all over the country have won these dandy ponies. They won them by starting early. As soon as they saw the advertisement and puzzle they went to work to solve it and so got a great big start in the contest. Don't let any one tell you that you cannot win "Chum" and his outfit, for you get an early start if you answer this advertisement right away.

SOLVE THE PUZZLE NOW AND GET TWO THOUSAND FREE VOTES

To test your quickness, to put you on your mettle and to give you a good running start we are printing the pony prize puzzle shown below. This picture shows two of our friends driving a beautiful pony like the one we are going to give away. In this picture there are six partly hidden faces which it will be lots of fun for you to find. It is not so easy to find the faces in this picture, but by close search and turning and twisting the picture around you can find them. Can you find them? You will win a prize if you do. Try it. It will pay you.

When you have discovered at least four of these faces mark each one with a cross (X), cut out the picture, send your name and address on the coupon below it and mail it to us. Inclose with it two 2c stamps to help pay the cost of postage and mailing of a special prize which we will send you. We know you will appreciate it and that it will be a big surprise to you.

We will also make you a present of 2,000 Free Pony Votes and tell you all about this splendid pony which we are going to give away with a full set of harness and beautiful pony cart, saddle and bridle. We are also going to give away other prizes for just a little effort on your part.

We want to impress on you that it is very necessary to start at once. It doesn't matter where you live. We are determined to give "Chum" and his outfit to some boy or girl absolutely free, and it may as well be you as any one else. If you don't win, it will be your own fault. We are going to do our part to help you win.

LIBERAL REWARDS TO ALL

This is the most liberal contest ever announced, and it is so arranged that whether you win "Chum" and outfit or not, if you take part in the contest and start off now with the 2,000 Free Votes we give you, we guarantee that you will be richly rewarded for everything, little or big, that you do. Remember, you get the extra rewards right away. There is no waiting or delay until the end of the contest to get your special prizes or cash rewards.

Up here in our big building we have boxes and boxes of golden treasures that are yours almost for the asking. During the contest we will give away hundreds of bicycles, watches, bracelets, flashlights, and many other presents, too numerous to mention. Our plan is so simple that it seems more like a dream than a reality. Everybody gets a prize. We are a big company and delight in giving away expensive premiums to advertise our great weekly papers. Get your share of these presents. Solve the puzzle and mail the coupon now, before you turn this page. Get in on this great prize distribution, and you will be mighty glad.

EASIEST CONTEST OF ALL

Easiest contest devised. Our plan is different from others. There are no losers in this contest, and those who show that they really want to win we are ready to help. Start today and you can win this beautiful Shetland Pony, "Chum," and his outfit without any cost to you.

ANSWER THIS AD TODAY

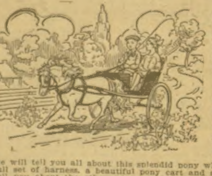
Find at least four of the six partly hidden faces in the puzzle picture, mark each with a cross, fill out the coupon, cut out the picture and coupon and mail it to us with two 2c stamps to help pay the postage and mailing expenses of the dandy big surprise present that we will send you. We will also send you a certificate of entry in the pony contest and give you 2,000 Free Votes toward winning "Chum" and his outfit. There are no losers. Every one gets a prize for everything that he or she does and you are not limited to any one prize alone, for you can get many easily—besides, you want "Chum" and his outfit and we are going to help you win it.

DON'T WAIT—DON'T DELAY—MAIL THIS COUPON TODAY ➡

Do not delay another minute, but solve the puzzle and write your name and address on the coupon and mail it to us, inclosing two 2c stamps to help pay the cost of mailing the prize we will give you for solving the puzzle. It is dangerous to delay. We want you to win "Chum" and his outfit, and we will help you if you will show that you are quick. The quicker you are to mail the coupon, the better your chance will be for winning. Mail the coupon right away. Address

W. D. BOYCE COMPANY PONY CONTEST MANAGER Department L
500-514 North Dearborn Street, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

SOLVE THE PUZZLE AND WIN A PRIZE



This picture shows two of our friends driving a beautiful pony, like the one we are going to give away. In this picture there are six partly hidden faces which it will be lots of fun for you to find. It is not so easy to find the faces in this picture, but by close search and by twisting and turning the picture around they will be revealed to you. Can you find them?

YOU WILL WIN A PRIZE

if you do. Try it, don't give up. It will pay you. When you have discovered **four** of these faces mark each with a cross (X), cut out the picture and mail it to us with 4 cents in stamps to help pay the postage and mailing expenses of the prize which you win. We will also send you the Certificate of Entry and **2,000 free votes** in our pony contest and we will tell you all about this splendid pony which we are going to give away with a full set of harness, a beautiful pony cart and also a saddle and bridle. We will also tell you about the other prizes we have for you.

W. D. BOYCE COMPANY,
Pony Contest Manager, Department L
500-514 N. Dearborn St., Chicago, Illinois.

Gentlemen:—I have marked the four faces on the picture puzzle which I am sending you together with 4 cents in stamps to help pay the postage and mailing expense of the prize you have for me. Please tell me how I can become the owner of "Chum," with the harness, pony carriage, saddle and bridle, delivered to me absolutely free. Also send me my certificate of entry and 2,000 free votes toward winning "Chum." Let me know also how to earn cash commissions and the many splendid prizes you have for me.

My name is..

Box No............R. F. D. St. No. or P. O...

Town..

State...